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SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY
MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 631.

FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 2ND, 1901.

[ONE PENNY.]

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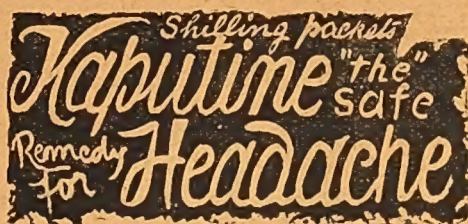
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Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories," Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

SHORT STORIES.

No. 631.]

For the Week Ending February 2nd, 1901.

[ONE PENNY.]



A DETECTIVE is well used to the unusual and to meeting as cold facts what, when told, seems a tissue of the wildest improbabilities. During my experience I have had one case which for certain strange features I have never had surpassed.

It occurred years ago, on the evening of the masked ball. I was free and attended it. It was the usual thing. The Conservatoire of Music was filled with gay women and young fellows about town. By twelve o'clock the hilarity was beginning to get well under way. My attention had been particularly drawn to one young woman. She was not very tall, but had a lovely figure. She was dressed like a columbine.

I noticed her because she was such an exquisitely graceful dancer. Her small feet, cased in gold shoes with high heels, twinkled as prettily as possible as they lightly touched the waxed floor. The dancing was an intense pleasure to her evidently. She could hardly keep her feet still during any pause in which she had not to move.

As I was standing near the door looking at her, a party of several young men came into the room. They stood and looked about and passed remarks on the scene as if they had not yet become acquainted with its features. They had been to a theatre, probably, and came to the ball after it. The eyes and cheeks of two or three of them were bright, as if they had been drinking. One young fellow seemed to be the object of much attention from the others.

He was a German, of medium height, with blue eyes and very fair hair, while a rich colour mantled in his cheeks. The others addressed him in German or French,

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and called him "Graf." From his manner and appearance it did not require much astuteness to conclude that he was a young German of rank who was visiting the country.

One of his companions turned to him with a broad smile and made some remark, pointing out one of the dancers.

I looked in the direction and saw my pretty Columbine pirouetting gracefully around, with her arms stretched out to her partner, a big fellow who was a little muddled with wine, and who has strayed out of the orbit of the girl in a turn in the dance. She was not going to be balked of her share in the measure, and tripped about by herself quite contentedly till he should come back.

I glanced at the group of fellows to see if it was she they were observing.

A change had come over the German. His face was as white as death, and his eyes were dilated and fixed. He had fallen a little back from the others, as if he did not wish to be observed. This was interesting, and I felt my professional instincts aroused. A moment after he made some proposal or said something that seemed to be a surprise to them, and I saw them shake hands with him. He left the hall in a hurried way.

I slipped after him. I wished to see what he did. He stood for a moment in the entrance hall, and I saw his hands clench fiercely. Then, in a distraught sort of way, he walked round to one of the other entrances to the ball-room, and looked about among the dancers. He tried to get where he could not be seen, and there was a fierce scowl on his face.

All at once he walked into the saloon, with an attempt at careless ease, and approached a masker who wore the costume of a Franciscan friar—a roomy brown suit, with a rope knotted at his waist for a girdle, and a large hood to it which he had pulled up over his head.

The young German spoke to him, and then drew him out of the room. In the corridor he spoke more earnestly to him. The man seemed to be declining some invitation or request. But after a few moments of earnest speech from the German, the two walked

away, and, keeping them in view, I saw the two leave the place.

I was at first tempted to follow them. But having no more definite purpose than to see what would come of their movements, I decided to remain, and witness the fun at the ball, which always grew fast and furious in the small hours of the morning.

So I resumed my old post and amused myself by watching the reckless extravagance of the mob of revellers.

While Columbine was resting after an especially lively dance, I saw the Franciscan monk enter the room and seat himself at her side.

He made some remarks to her. She coquettishly



The young German spoke to him, and then drew him out of the room.

answered them. Then to another she shook her head with playful determination. The monk pressed the point, for he bent forward, though I noticed that when she turned towards him he seemed to shrink back.

Finally Columbine sprang to her feet, took his arm, and, with a half-regretful glance at the merry dancers, left the room with him.

The next day the evening papers had a startling story. I have kept the newspaper account. It was this:

"A SEQUEL TO THE MASKED BALL."

"PEOPLE who were at the masked ball last night in the Conservatoire of Music may have remarked a young woman dressed as Columbine, who excited a good deal of attention by her graceful dancing. She is lying at the mortuary to-day, dead, waiting to be identified. It seems a cruel mockery, after her last night's gaiety, to behold her now, in her ball dress of black and yellow velvet, lying till someone shall tell who she is.

"The young girl was strangled to death last night in a carriage. She left the ball with someone dressed like a Franciscan monk at two o'clock. The monk gave to the driver a card, on which he had written an address. He also gave the driver a sovereign. All this without a word. He was closely masked. The driver had only remarked that his hand was very white and smooth; and that he wore a heavy plain gold ring.

"The two got in and he drove off. While he was driving along he heard a sound which attracted his attention. On looking round he saw that the door of the carriage was open. He stopped, reached back with his whip, and banged it to. He supposed the couple inside were probably the worse for the wine they had taken at the ball, and had either failed to shut the door, which had worked open, or that the handle of the door had been fiddled with till it opened, and they were too far gone to notice it.

"When he reached his destination, he got off the box and opened the carriage door.

"A lamp-post in front of the house lit up the carriage. The curtains of the carriage windows had been drawn. They were not drawn when the couple got in. What he saw terrified him. Columbine was lying, with her white wraps fallen about her, between the seats, and a monk's frock and a girdle of rope, together with a mask, were tossed on a seat. The monk had disappeared!

"The driver shook the girl and tried to rouse her, but could not. He pulled her forward, then saw that her face was frightfully red and that the eyes were puffed. On the throat were the marks of fingers where a terrible grip had been taken of her neck.

"The story was clear enough. The monk, whoever he was, had strangled the girl in the vehicle, and had then thrown off his disguise and let himself out of the door while the carriage was still in motion.

"The cabman drove at once to the nearest police-station and told his story. The body was taken to the mortuary. The detectives are at work on the case, which promises to be a very exciting one. Known: A man dressed as a monk who was at the masked ball, and who had a smooth, white hand, on which he wears, or wore, a plain gold ring. Unknown: The murderer. Who is the detective that will run down the game?"

"Here he is," I said to myself as I finished reading the account. I had more points than the paper gave. The scenes at the ball came back to me vividly now. —the sudden deathly paleness of the German stranger and his departure with the Franciscan friar! There was a connection here that was too evident to be passed over.

I determined to find out who had murdered the pretty Columbine, who had won me so by her graceful dancing and smiling good-humour. Early next morning I went to the mortuary. There she lay, the dainty figure stretched out so stiff and cold in the big gloomy room. What a contrast to the scene in which I had seen her last!

I found that a beautiful emerald which I noticed pinned in her corsage on the night of the ball was gone. It had been rudely plucked away, for the lace about the edge of her dress was torn and hanging. But a large ring of rubies and diamonds had been left on her finger and was kept at the station. I had noticed the emerald because it had an old-fashioned setting in gold, and impressed me as a family jewel.

I made a tour of all the swell hotels in the city and examined their registers. In one near Charing Cross I found the entry, "Count Hermann Stolzberger and servant." He had arrived three days before.

I engaged a room at the hotel, for I felt I must watch this man. I had inquired if Count Stolzberger had left town, and the clerk had told me no. Was he in now? No. He had gone out with friends and would not be back for dinner.

That evening I lounged round the office, sitting in the long corridor into which the door from the street opened. I waited until twelve. No count! I prolonged my guard for an hour more, and he had not appeared. I wished above all to get a look at Count Hermann Stolzberger. He might, perhaps, remain out all night. On the other hand, he possibly had been detained by friends and would yet return. I waited!

My patience was rewarded. At half-past one a cab rolled up to the door, and a young man in a large overcoat, somewhat foreign in its style, sprang out and walked with a quick, nervous tread along the corridor. He walked rapidly past, but my eye had taken him in from the moment he opened the door: My memory for faces is excellent. I recognised the fair hair and complexion of the Count at once, though there was not much colour in his cheeks, and his face looked worn and thin. Count Hermann Stolzberger was the young German who had entered the Masked Ball, and turned pale at the sight of the Columbine.

I have said that this case almost seemed to unroll itself for me; but there were two or three connections to be made to constitute proof, and not leave me with a distinct suspicion only. The body was identified as that of Marie Colombe; she had been in London about a fortnight and was engaged at a costumier's, but nothing more was known of her antecedents.

The costumier had claimed the Franciscan's robe. I fancy he did this more through curiosity to find if it was the one he had let, than on the account of the value of it, for it must have been very cheap. I got the

address of this man and called on him. I asked him if he remembered the man who had hired it.

He said he did. It was a smooth-faced, dark-complexioned man of about forty. He remembered, because he had made some joke with him about his being clean-shaven enough for a monk.

The man had given no address, and he did not know who he was. This was a slight hitch in the proceedings. I was convinced that the murderer in the garb of the Franciscan friar was not the man who had engaged it of the costumier, but the German. He was of much the

same size and build as the original monk, and so he had assumed the loose brown habit without exciting my attention. But the fact of the German's turning so pale and calling the monk out from the dance had made me feel that he was the one who had strangled the gay Columbine in the carriage that night.

The Count seemed to grow visibly thinner. There was a drawn look on his face, and during the time that the dead girl lay at the mortuary he seemed to be held by some terrible thought.

The colour had become faint in his cheeks, and his eyes had a haggard look. When he was with others he would affect a gaiety that drove much of this distressing expression from his face; but when he came home alone it was very marked.

Something had to be done if I was to secure

the proof that would convict the Count. It was the third day since I had come to the hotel and busied myself in studying him. He had gone to the reading-room, contrary to his usual habit, after finishing his breakfast.

While he was there two of his friends came in, and they began conversing together. I slipped across the way and hastily wrote a message, sealed it, and charged a messenger-boy to deliver it, saying that he was to wait and see if any answer would be given.

I hurried back to the reading-room of the hotel again. The Count and his friends were still there. If they only remained till the messenger arrived! I had seated myself in a corner behind some one, but with my eyes commanding a full view of the three. The message did come before they left. The Count tore open the envelope and read the note. I could not but admire his self-control. The nostrils expanded and hardened, and a stolid look crept into his eyes for a moment; but that was all.

What he read was this: "You know and I know



The Count tore open the envelope and read the note.

whose hands left those marks on the throat. Why do you not wear your gold ring?"

He remained in thought for a moment. Then he lightly excused himself to his friends and went out, having asked something of the servant. He was not gone very long. When he returned he talked easily to his two friends, and after a little while they went out together.

When he came in that night a letter was waiting for him which had come by post. "What good did it do to kill Columbine?" was all there was in it.

The next morning when he awoke he found a note under his door. Its contents were these words: "Is it harder to be choked to death by ten fingers or by a rope?"

The evening of the following day he received another message. It ran: "Leave London at once if you would save your neck."

The Count was too sharp for me. He did not go; but he did not go out so much in the daytime.

One morning he went out about the hour he generally left the hotel. It was the fourth day after the note which advised him to leave London. He went directly to a station and took train for Manchester. I was prepared for this emergency, and went by the same train.

When it arrived in Manchester, he went to an hotel and registered as Karl Schlechter. He had not been in his room half an hour when a note was given him. It had been sent by a messenger-boy. "Karl Schlechter is Count Herman Stolzberger, and the halter is as near him here as in London," ran the note.

He left the place that night after sending a telegram. Probably, it was to his man in London. He went to Glasgow. A note was handed to him in the same way as soon as he had got well settled at his hotel: "The ghost of a strangled girl does not care for place."

He remained here only a day, sending another telegram. Before the train started which carried him away, he walked along the platform deliberately looking at the passengers in the carriages.

He came back to Liverpool, where the old story was repeated, "Eyes sharper than your own are still on you. You cannot escape the hold of your murdered victim."

The next step was to Cardiff.

He went through the same tactics on the platform and his sharp eye took me in.

A new note reached him in Cardiff.

"It may not be long before we meet again, and then my fingers will be at your throat."

In the evening after dinner he was in the billiard-room of the hotel.

He saw me there and finally came and seated himself by my side. He engaged me in conversation. He spoke English in a broken way which there is no need to reproduce.

"Was I from London?" he began.

"Yes."

"Are you travelling for pleasure or business?" he asked next.

"For pleasure," I answered.

"A foreigner is a little surprised when he sees an Englishman travelling in his own country. It seems as if he must be familiar with it. Where are you going from here?"

"Oh, I am not settled. I drift where the humour takes me."

I saw I had become a subject of his suspicions. But he did not yet know me as the author of the notes.

He did not remain long in Cardiff. I went from the

place when he did. He had noticed me once or twice and felt certain I was following him. He went to Chester. When we arrived there, he gave some order to a cabman, before stepping into the cab. I engaged another cabman.

"Follow that cab until the man gets out, but only keep close enough to know where it goes."

The cab in which the Count was seated travelled about without any definite termination apparently. He wished to know if anyone were following him, and had told the cabman to see if another cab were after him. He soon found there was, and then he drove at once to the hotel, and hurried into the office.

I got there a few minutes later. I made inquiries. His name was not on the book at all. I looked about the place and found him sitting not far off. He had begun to watch me. I went downstairs and gave a note to one of the boys and arranged for it to be delivered to Count Stolzberger. I had prepared it beforehand, so I was only gone a moment. He kept me well in view as much as he could. When he finally entered his name, he signed his right name, Count Stolzberger, and the clerk gave him the message which had been brought in.

He seemed puzzled. He had kept me in view ever since I arrived, and I had had no time to write a note. So for a moment he did not know what to think. The note had said:

"The man who lent you the costume of the friar has been found. There are not many more turns for you now. This man will recognise you when he sees you. Other witnesses will prove that you spoke to Columbine, drove off with her, and that the poor girl was found dead after your disappearance. What is wanting to fit the rope to your neck?"

He engaged his room, and soon after he had gone to it a boy came to me and asked me to go to the Count's room for a few moments.

Count Stolzberger was sitting in an easy-chair near a table, on which there were writing-materials. He rose, greeted me with dignity, and motioned me to a chair, asking me to sit down.

"You remember that we both came from Cardiff?"

"We may have done so," I answered.

"I have been doing a little detective business with you for its object, and my investigation has shown me that you are a detective, and that you are engaged in working up the case of the girl who was murdered after the Masked Ball. I am right, am I not?" he inquired, all in the same calm, measured way.

"Yes," I replied. "I have been keeping you in sight, Count, until the necessary proofs were obtained that would convict the murderer."

"You fancy that I am the one who did the deed?" he asked, in the same measured tones.

"I know it," I answered quietly, but with an air of conviction.

"The several notes I have received were from you, I suppose," he continued, in his easy, careless tones.

"Yes."

"And you have the proof that I am the murderer?" he inquired, turning his eyes unflinchingly on me.

I smiled.

"Count, I fear that everything is against you!"

"You would be sadly mortified to find you were mistaken, I presume?"

"I should be much surprised," I returned again, with a quiet smile.

"What time did the conveyance drive off with the monk and the girl?" he asked me.

"At ten minutes past two. The driver noted the time."

"Well, let me tell you something that may modify your search in the business. I had made arrangements to leave with the girl. I did not wish in any way to be connected with her departure. So just when we were ready to go down to the vehicle I told her to wait for me at the entrance for five minutes. So she said she would and went down."

"I had put on the monk's garb over my evening dress. I threw it off and left it in one of the dressing-rooms. I hurried back to the hall and made it a point to show myself to several persons who knew me. I feared that possibly some one had seen me talk to the monk, and would connect this with the disappearance of Columbine afterwards with a monk. This was my reason for conspicuously showing myself after she had gone out with me in the monk's dress."

"I was not away more than six or seven minutes, when I went back to the dressing-room to put on the disguise again. It was gone! I searched in the neighbouring rooms, thinking someone might have moved it to some other place. I could not find it. I then hastened down to the entrance to go with the Columbine in my dress-suit, with a mask on, for I had slipped that in my breast."

"The girl was not there! I inquired of some of the bystanders, and they told me that a monk had got into a carriage with her not five minutes before. Who that monk was I am as ignorant as yourself. You have followed a false clue. I did not go with the girl, and can prove an alibi for the next two hours after she drove off. Several of my friends were with me from then till I went to my hotel, and my man knows the hour when I came home with them. I was terribly shocked the next day when I heard of her death."

I felt considerably taken back and very foolish. The Count's accents were those of truth, and afterwards his assertions were fully borne out by witnesses.

"But what were your relations to the girl?" I asked, unwilling to acknowledge defeat, and yet convinced that the Count was speaking the truth. "Why were you so anxious to give people the idea that you were not going with the girl in the guise of a monk, and why did you not face the matter out in London instead of travelling all over the country?"

"I will tell you as well as I can," replied the Count, after a pause. "I must go back a little."

"My father was a captain of Uhlans, and took part in the war between Germany and France in 1870. At Amiens he ordered a Frenchman to be shot for having brutally murdered one of the Uhlans."

"Years passed, and my father died. My mother advertised for a French maid—it was against my wish, for I do not understand why we Germans should adopt the ways of other people. The girl who obtained the situation was the girl who was killed the other night. She was the daughter of that Frenchman and was but a baby at that time, but she seems to have been imbued with a desire to avenge her father's death on my father or on some member of his family. She watched for her opportunity, and it came when she obtained the position of maid to my mother. Of course, we did not know that until afterwards."

"Of course not," I assented.

"In the end she administered poison to my mother, which narrowly resulted in the death of my parent. She fled, taking with her an emerald which had been in our family for generations, and was regarded by all of

us with superstitious awe—even I have a half-belief in it.

"The superstition is that, if the emerald is lost to the family, every member of the family alive at the time of its loss will meet with a violent death. My mother and I were the only two alive at the time the girl took it, and my mother recovered from the poison, only to be thrown out of her carriage and killed."

"How long was that ago?" I asked, feeling much interested.

"Nearly a year. I tried to find the girl and to trace



I made it my business to scrap acquaintance with him, and give him plenty to drink.

the emerald, but without success. Imagine my surprise when I saw both at the ball. I resolved to regain possession of the gem, so I had speech with the girl, and threatened to hand her over to justice for attempted murder if she did not give me the emerald. She was a daring, revengeful, and hardened creature, and she refused. Finally, seeing that I was in earnest, she asked me to drive away with her, and she would give it up to me in the vehicle; she pretended that she could not give it to me at once without exciting suspicion.

"I have now no doubt that it was a scheme to get away from me, but I fell in with it because I was anxious to get back the emerald. I meant to have it, even if I took it from her by force; hence my showing myself in evening dress and so on."

"I was enraged when I found that she had eluded me, after all; but I was horrified when, on the following

day, I heard that she had been strangled and that my emerald had been taken. I believe that the reason that I tried to escape from the man who was tracking me instead of facing the matter, was my belief in the superstition about dying a violent death after losing the stone."

That was all the Count could tell me, and I had to give up further research for the time; but later on I made inquiries in Amiens, and gradually solved the mystery of the murder. I found that Marie Colombe, as I will continue to call her, had boldly returned to her native place after her flight from the Count's mansion. There she had deliberately plotted the ruin of a young fellow upon whom her affections had been fixed, but who by no means entertained similar feelings towards her. She had succeeded in bringing about his disgrace by a trumped-up charge of a particularly heinous character—at least, both the young fellow and his relatives said the charge was false; but the unfortunate man was obliged to leave the country and go to America.

His fiancée left Amiens shortly afterwards, suddenly and without giving her parents the least notice of her intention. It was about three months afterwards when her parents received a letter from America which told them that their daughter had married the man of her choice, whom she believed to be innocent.

"A woman will do everything for the man she loves,"

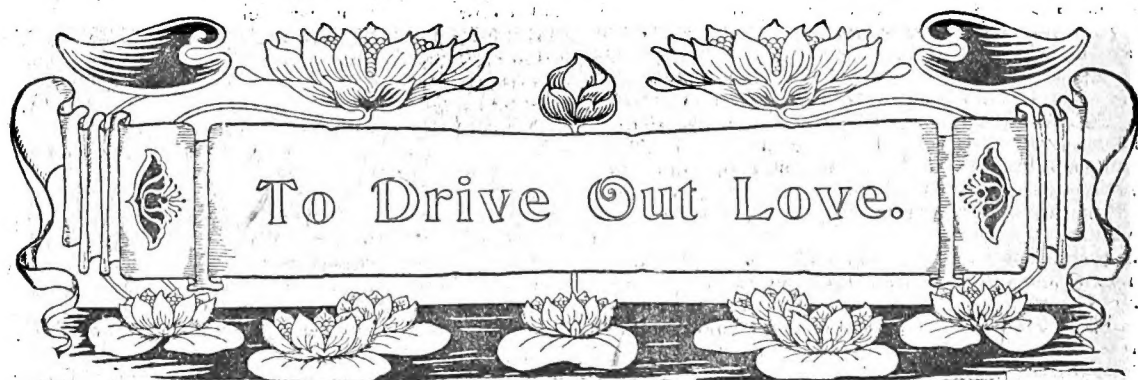
the letter concluded, "and before travelling to America, I was able to avenge the wrong done to my husband. The chance came while I was in London, where I stayed with old Barbette, who helped me to get across the Atlantic—I chose to go that way to avoid being overtaken."

"I went to a masked ball and I saw the woman who had wrought the mischief. She was going away with a man dressed as a monk. I am tall for a woman, and it is easy to give an address which you have seen written. Marie Colombe will do no more mischief and her emerald is at the bottom of the ocean."

I admit having done a very mean thing in order to get a sight of that letter. Her parents, although they knew nothing of the exact circumstances, were cute enough to understand that it compromised their daughter and had never shown it to anyone or revealed the full contents. But having heard that the father had let slip one or two significant remarks after having partaken a little too freely of liquor, I made it my business to scrape acquaintance with him and give him plenty to drink. The result was that, under a pledge of secrecy, I was permitted to read the letter.

I fathomed the mystery during a holiday and just to satisfy my professional pride, but I never made professional use of my knowledge. In fact, I never knew in what part of America the young people resided.

LAWRENCE BOYNE.



"HIST! Oh, go quickly, someone is coming!"

The girl fancied that she had detected a sound near them and she freed herself from her lover's embrace; but he clasped her again in his arms and their lips met in the first kiss.

"I love you," he exclaimed with intense feeling. "It is nothing, don't be alarmed. Tell me that you love me!"

The girl, reassured, yielded to his embrace. "I will never marry anyone but you!" she whispered softly.

"We love each other, and yet we do not know one another's names," he said caressingly. "Such is the power of love! Now you must tell me your name. I can guess it is sweet, as befits—"

Again that sound; and nearer! There was no doubt about it this time: with a suppressed cry of fear the girl tore herself away and darted swiftly along the narrow path by the convent wall and disappeared.

The man, knowing that he was trespassing and

anxious to avoid a meeting that might lead to disagreeable consequences to the girl, ran in the opposite direction till he came to the point where he could scale the wall more easily, and then clambered up and dropped into the open thoroughfare on the other side.

"If I had been caught," he murmured as he hurried along, "they might have connected me with her, although I don't see how. Otherwise I would not have minded the adventure—Fancy Moran on the wrong side of a convent wall! Poor girl, I hope she has escaped!"

Victor Moran was an actor, a member of the Comédie Française, and neither better nor worse than most men of his time (the first half of the eighteenth century). He had seen this sweet-faced girl of seventeen by accident one day; he knew that she was a scholar in the Carmelite Convent and, animated by the reckless, adventurous spirit of the day, he had resolved to pay court to her.

He had succeeded in attracting her attention, and in

sending a note to her; he was a distinctly handsome man and the girl fell in love with him, returning an answer to his notes and finally agreeing to a meeting. Victor Moran fixed the trysting place—under the shadow of the wall; it would be easy for him to scale the mass of stone and cement, while she would merely have to leave the convent building and make her way through the spacious grounds. The meeting took place and we have seen the result.

Victor Moran had begun this adventure with the simple idea of gratifying his vanity of making a conquest, but as he wended his way back to his lodgings he had to confess to himself that he had been caught in his own trap. He was in love, deeply in love, with a girl who was unknown to him and to whom he was unknown—a pretty, artless girl, capable of intense feeling, for whom a man would be willing to give up his life. He had discovered this by intuition rather than by experience, although even in her letters there was a spirit of goodness which, unrecognised by him at first, now forced itself clearly upon his mind.

He succeeded in passing another note to the object of his new born affection, and at the time he had appointed he once more scaled the Convent wall. But he was doomed to disappointment; he waited for nearly an hour, but she did not appear, and he returned with a sorrowful heart.

Two months went by without his seeing her, but his love for her increased. It was a novel experience for Victor Moran to be consumed by this strange passion; he would have laughed at it only a short time previously. Her image was constantly before him and he was ever on the watch for the sweet unknown.

He was cast for the part of a Turkish nobleman in a new play by Voltaire; the character was that of a man noble in name and in nature, and Moran, rising to the occasion, played it with consummate skill. The first performance was a grand success, and the second representation of the play was looked forward to by all the high personages who patronised the theatre.

Moran was in the midst of one of his lofty and soul-stirring monologues when his eyes wandered to a particular box.

The flow of language suddenly ceased and Moran remained mute. In that box he saw the girl he loved.

The prompter, thinking that Moran's memory had failed him for the moment gave him the cue; recalled to himself by the voices of the prompter and by the murmur which arose from the audience, Moran made an effort and went on with his lines.

But now he was playing for her; there was no one else in the theatre, so far as he was concerned, and he cared nothing for the approval of others.—He knew nothing of it—he wanted her approbation, and hers only.

When the play was finished she left the box in the company of the elderly gentleman who was its other occupant.

Moran wanted to run after her, but he was still in Eastern garb and dared not venture in the street in that guise. Voltaire had just introduced the novelty of actors dressing in a costume suitable for the part—it had up till then been the common usage to speak one's lines attired in ordinary everyday clothes, without regard to the character, and to have ventured into the open in that dress would have been an invitation to the roughs to fall foul of him. He was obliged to wait until he had changed

his clothes but by that time the unknown had disappeared.

He wanted to ask who this girl was, but he was afraid to make inquiries concerning the name of the gentleman who had hired the box for that evening.

Afraid? Yes, it might almost be said that he was ashamed; it was an entirely new sensation, but it arose from the certainty that if he made the enquiry it would come to the ears of some of his companions and would give them an opportunity to make jests in which his name would be coupled with that of the girl. And he would not subject her, even unconsciously on her part, to such disparagement.

About a week later she was again at the theatre with the elderly gentleman.

Moran again forgot the whole house and played for her, watching her for any sign that would tell him she still loved him.

He saw how sympathetic she was, how much his eloquent periods moved her, how constantly her eyes followed him and he was happy. He was good at heart, and this love was bringing out all his finer qualities and suppressing the bad ones.

Once more he tried to overtake her after she had left the theatre, but the change of costume took so long. He might have engaged someone to find out what he wished to know, but he shrank from so doing.

"She loves me! She loves me!" he said to himself many times each day.

He looked for her at each performance, but another week elapsed before he saw her in the box. He had made up his mind that he would follow her this time, and had so arranged that he could change his attire without the slightest delay; he was out in the street in time to see a carriage disappear at the end of the street, but after following it for some distance he was grievously disappointed to find that he had been following someone else.

The run of that piece was soon over, and Moran saw no more of his loved one. He was seated in his little sitting room one day about two months after the last visit of the girl to the theatre, when he was informed that a gentleman wished to see him. He told the porter to show the visitor in, and the invitation was quickly followed by the entrance of a man of noble demeanour whom Moran immediately recognised as the other occupant of the stage box.

"I have come to ask your assistance in a difficult matter, Monsieur Moran," said the new comer, without troubling to introduce himself. "I know you are in a position to help me, and the object of this visit is to induce you to do so."

"Pray be seated, monsieur," returned Moran politely, offering his visitor a chair. "I shall be delighted if I can be of service."

"The matter of which I speak is this: A young lady belonging to one of the noblest families of France is asked to marry a man of equal rank. The marriage has the approval of his Majesty the King—nay, it is his Majesty's desire that this union should be consummated. But the young lady flatly refuses. Why? Because, so she says and I believe it to be true, she is irrevocably in love with another man."

The visitor paused for breath, for he had spoken quickly and in a manner that denoted anxiety. Moran waited in silence for him to continue.

"What would you do in such a case, Monsieur Moran?"

"I?" stammered Moran, surprised at the question.

"Yes; I ask your advice."

"I should allow her to marry the man she loves!"

"But that is impossible!" exclaimed the visitor in decisive tones. "The man with whom she is in love is far below her in position. He is a man of honour, I doubt not; but he is only an actor. I mean no offence, but if you consider that her father is one of the noblest of the peers of France, you will understand how great is the difference between them and you will recognise that she cannot marry him."

"But if she loves him, how can she marry the other man?" objected Moran.

"I will tell you how it can be done," said the visitor, rising and placing his hand on Moran's shoulder.

The latter rose and faced him.

"Monsieur Moran, I am the Duke of Antin, the young lady is my daughter, and the man whom she says she loves is—you!"

Moran turned pale and trembled.

"You see what an immense gulf lies between you," pursued the Duke, more firmly now. "The way to make my daughter willing to contract this marriage which is so suitable, so desirable in every respect, is to drive out love by inspiring disgust. You can do this, and you will be rendering her a service. You must see that it is utterly impossible for her to marry you, and if you really love her you will not attempt to drag her down to your level. Then, if she can't marry you, why not make it possible for her to marry the peer who desires to possess her. You are an actor and can play a part with skill; it will be a sacrifice worthy of a great love, to kill her affection for you by playing a part that will cause her to loathe you."

Moran stood like one stunned; his thoughts chased one another through his mind with the rapidity of lightning. He recognised the truth of it all, but—oh!—how hard and cruel fate was to him!

"What do you wish me to do?" he asked, in a strange voice, after a long pause.

The next day Moran presented himself at the mansion of the Duke of Antin as a guest invited to dinner. He was not unaccustomed to the aspect of luxury, but the magnificence which confronted him at the very entrance of the Duke's residence was sufficient to abash him. A gorgeously-attired lackey announced his arrival, and he saw the Duke, leading his daughter by the hand, approaching to greet him.

"My dear, this is Monsieur Moran, the distinguished actor, who has consented to honour our table by his presence at dinner."

The Duke spoke in his courtliest manner; he could not have done more honour to a peer of equal rank with himself.

Mademoiselle Marie de Voudrin acknowledged Moran's salute with the utmost grace. Their eyes met for a moment and then they avoided each other's gaze. Both were extremely pale.

Moran thought of his own position in comparison with that of the girl he loved, and the reflection strengthened his determination to play the part which her father had asked him.

It was for her, he thought, and he nerved himself for the effort.

It was a family dinner party, so there were only those three at the table.

Having overcome his repugnance at playing the part that was to drive out love and inspire loathing, Moran lent himself to his task with all the skill of which he was capable.

He partook freely of the wine, and pretended that this beverage had its effect upon him. He behaved at the table like an ill-bred and vulgar member of the proletariat rather than like the gentleman he really was.

As the wine gradually muddled his brain, he sang snatches of vulgar songs, related coarse jokes and made himself in every way an object of disgust.

By the time the dinner was at an end he was to all appearances in such a disreputable condition that he was certainly not fit to dine with lackeys, to say nothing of the company in which he found himself.

As a climax, he slipped off his chair in the very midst of a drunken song, dragging the cloth with him and falling under the table to the sound of breaking plates and glass.

The girl left the table, her eyes distended with an expression which her father translated as one of ineffable disgust. When Moran heard the door shut he picked himself up and stood erect, tears falling from his eyes down his cheeks.

"Superb! Magnificent!" ejaculated the Duke, unable to find words to fittingly express his admiration. "You are a grand actor; you played that part with a skill beyond comparison. I believe my daughter simply hates the sight of you now. How can I ever repay you? Here, take this purse of gold, and I will send you ten times as much more! You refuse? But such skill ought to be well paid! Why, you have acted so admirably that there are actually real tears coming from your eyes! You must—"

But Moran cut him short by rushing from the room, his grief finding vent in a flood of tears which he could not repress.

The bells of the church were ringing, carriages were driving up to the door one after another, and people were standing in crowds to watch and satisfy their idle curiosity. Moran felt a pang at his heart. He heard one of the crowd utter the names of the Duke of Antin and his daughter, so he turned his steps in another direction and hurried away.

"Yes, I have succeeded! To-day she is to be married to a man of equal rank. A man whom she will be able to love now that she despises me!"

It was a bitter thought; he would not have altered the circumstances even if he could, for it was for the best. He had argued it out with himself many times, and each time he ended with the same decision, yet the argument was gone through on each successive day just as though it had never arisen before.

What was life to him now? He had, at first, thought of putting an end to his existence, but such a course would have been dishonourable alike to her and to himself. He must live it out.

In this frame of mind he arrived at his lodgings, and the first thing he saw was an envelope addressed to himself, in a handwriting that sent a thrill through and through him. He tore it open and read these lines:

"It was a noble sacrifice, worthy of a great love. It was only a part which you played, it was not real; the eyes of love are keen, and I saw through the plot. As it is decreed by fate that I cannot marry you, I will marry no other man; I vowed it that night under the convent wall, and I meant what I said. As I cannot enjoy the love of the man of my choice, the light is gone from this world for me, and I am about to take the veil. By the time this letter reaches you, the name of Marie de Voudrin will be a thing of the past, and she who bore it will be known as Sister Martha."

G. E. LINGEN.

THE LION'S WARS



The Two Great Burmese Wars of 1823-6 and 1854-6

HOW WE ACQUIRED BRITISH BURMAH.

A warlike chief, Alungpaya, installed himself as ruler, bequeathing to his successors a policy of expansion which they dutifully endeavoured to carry out. One of them in 1784 annexed Arrakan, and another in 1808 added Assam to his dominions.

The extending policy of their rulers was highly pleasing to the Burmese.

Afflicted with a colossal vanity, they regarded themselves as quite the foremost nation in the world.

Consequently, when they learnt that their traditional policy would not be tolerated by the authorities in Calcutta, they gave the envoy we sent them to understand that they looked upon us as interlopers and that if we attempted to prevent them from enlarging their dominions they should drive us out of the country.

Our statesmen, feeling that India required a period of repose after so many wars, sent two embassies to Ava to try and arrange matters amicably; but, as usual with Oriental races who believe only in force, our remonstrances were treated as signs of fear, and as they were densely ignorant of our power and resources, the members of the second mission were treated in the most insolent fashion.

The resources of diplomacy being exhausted, war was formally declared on February 24th, 1824.

From the first it became apparent that, apart from the warlike character of the people, Lower Burmah was not an ideal country for military operations. A region of forest and morass, the country, even when not inundated, was covered with so many pestilential swamps as to make a prolonged stay extremely dangerous. Little, too, was known of the country, save in the neighbourhood of the rivers. Indeed, the greater part may be said to have been quite unexplored.

To march an army several hundred miles through an enemy's country is always a hazardous operation, but when the population is hostile, and maps are not to be had, the risks are vastly increased.

The defensive methods of the Burmese in war were

OUR wars in India have been so numerous that at one time there existed a pretty general belief that the majority might have been averted, had we adopted a less masterful policy with the native rulers. For instance, in the war with Burmah it was held that the Bengal government had acted with great precipitancy; and we thought so too, till a thorough examination of the events which preceded the conflict, convinced us that the ceaseless intrigues of the Burmese with the native Princes of India rendered hostilities sooner or later inevitable.

Burmah lies on the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal, and its lands extend along the valley of the Irrawaddy. At the time of its conquest by Britain, Burmah was peopled by a race with a Thibet-Chinese origin, the original dynasty being known as the Sovereignty of Ava. The kingdom of Ava came to an end in 1750.

admirably adapted to the country. In the old days, when hostile tribes warred with each other, they retarded, if indeed they did not prevent, the progress of the adversary by series of stockades over twenty feet high, of enormous strength, and intrenchments. Inside these stockades high platforms carried numerous guns discharging balls of about twelve ounces.

The army sent consisted of 11,000 men under General Sir Archibald Campbell. On May 11th, 1824, the troops ascended the Irrawady and blockaded Rangoon. Then came the rains, the damp heat causing so much sickness that in a short time almost the entire army was unfit for duty. Enough men were left, however, to attack Kamainet, which boasted of a stockade believed by the Burmese to be impregnable.

It was no doubt a formidable specimen of native fortification, and was, moreover, defended by thirty pieces of artillery; but our men soon stormed it, one result of the victory being that Synam, the ancient capital of Pegu, fell into our hands. This reverse somewhat lowered the belief of the Burmese in their invincibility, but their arrogance temporarily revived after the defeat of Colonel Smith and a brigade of native infantry at Kaiklu, October 7th, 1824. Then a crushing defeat at Kokein on December 15th again discouraged them. The resistance offered was so feeble that we had little difficulty in capturing Assam.

A couple of victories led to this province being formally annexed January 25th, 1825. These successes encouraged Calcutta to make a fresh effort to subjugate the Burmese, so two more expeditions were got ready, the main object being to capture Ava. One of 11,000 men under General Morrison was to proceed by way of Chittagong across the mountains to Ava.

The other, 7,000 strong, under Colonel Smith was to traverse Kachar and then march along the valley of the Ningti till a union was effected. The plan miscarried, the forests, rivers, and swamps encountered were so numerous, that after struggling for two months Colonel Smith returned.

The army of General Morrison fared but little better. The Burmese proved on acquaintance to be a deal more cunning than courageous. They made no effort to prevent us conquering Arakan, their plan being to lure us into the interior, where the unhealthiness of the climate might be trusted to decimate our numbers. After struggling for four months to defeat Generals Fever and Dysentery, the army was withdrawn to the coast.

In the following year, 1825, General Campbell renewed the attempt to penetrate the unknown fastnesses and pestilential jungles of Chittagong at a point the Burmese least expected. This time the force was divided into three expeditions under the respective commands of Generals Campbell, Cotton, and Major (afterwards Sir Robert) Sale. On the last named officer reaching Bassien the Burmese fired the town and retired. Not knowing what to do next, in fact greatly perplexed, Sale returned to Rangoon.

General Cotton fared even worse. Ascending the Irrawady his men made a most gallant attempt to storm Donabem. But the stockade which surrounded the town was so strong, and the 140 guns protecting it so ably served, that the losses increased with such rapidity that 12,000 picked men of the Burmese army were induced to leave the stockade and attack us in the open.

The qualities they exhibited were not quite so phenomenal as one had been led to believe, but they fought

so well that it took our men two hours to drive them back.

From the 3rd to the 23rd of April we fought a series of pitched battles, in which, although vastly outnumbered, we drove them from every position they took up.

On the 25th of April we entered Prome.

After this the enemy so lost heart that it was seldom they could be got to make a stand.

When their forces—swelled by reinforcements—reached a total of 30,000 men they would carefully select a position and wait for us to attack them, but the result was always the same.

They were good soldiers, more than a match probably for any native troops, but they could not stand the determined rushes of the red-coats.

In February, 1826, we had penetrated to Vandabu, sixty miles from Ava.

With no prospect of staying our advance the now humbled Burmese concluded a treaty, making over to us Arrakan and Tenasserim.

In addition they paid us a crore of rupees, not so much to defray the expenses of the war but as a proof of their submission.

The Burmese, however, did not long retain their kindly sentiments for us. Besides exacting land and money, we had compelled them to accept the presence of a British Resident at Ava. The Burmese emperor, who called himself the Elder Brother of China and "the Lord which is the greatest of Kings," naturally regarded with intense hatred the civilian gentleman who kept such a watchful eye over the interests of the British traders, and grew so stern when the detested treaty was infringed—detested chiefly because the emperor knew that it was entered into by the predecessor whom he had got rid of.

It was not pleasant, after killing off all the reigning family in order to render his own dynasty secure, to have his supremacy disputed by a barbarian envoy. The Burmese sovereign having resolved to be master in his own dominions, proceeded to treat our representative with such marked discourtesy that in 1840 the Resident retired to Rangoon.

During the next twelve years diplomatic relations were suspended. Twelve years is so long a time that the emperor at last began to think that the British lion had gone to sleep. He presently became so convinced of this that he seized the property of the British traders at Rangoon, besides subjecting the persons of two of them to the greatest indignity.

The Government now acted with promptitude. The emperor was not only called on to compensate the merchants for their losses, apologise to the British crown, and pay a fine of one million rupees; but to bring home to this Buddhist potentate the dangers attaching to waking up the royal beast, we dispatched several war vessels to Rangoon and demanded its surrender. The Governor of that place, however, modelling his deportment upon that of his royal master grossly insulted our naval officers. Being deficient in artillery, we had to be content with blockading the port.

Without an instant's delay, an expedition was fitted out. The land forces consisted of 4,500 men of all ranks and were placed under the command of General Godwin, whose plans seemed to have been characterised by commendable foresight, for he at once proceeded to blockade the Irrawady. A prudent move this, for as Ava drew all its foodstuffs by way of this river, the pinch of hunger was soon felt.



Drawn by]

[O. Lawson Wood,

When some of the storming parties broke in a city gate some of the gunners fastened to the guns fainted.

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Then a night march gave us the town of Martaban. The enemy were permitted to see us start in the direction of Bassien and of course concluded that was our destination. At nightfall, the route was suddenly changed, and before Martaban could set its defence in order, our men were in the town beating down all opposition.

Admiral Austin, who commanded the fleet, then captured Bassien, which gave us command of the whole of the sea coast. The most brilliant achievement of this war, however, was the storming of Rangoon, especially noteworthy being the capture of the world-famed Golden Pagoda, a Buddhist temple held in the deepest veneration by the Burmese.

Standing in the middle of a plain, this towering edifice, 350ft. high, was visited yearly by over ten million pilgrims.

Its defences were of the most formidable description. A stockade lined with guns which surrounded the Pagoda, was of such enormous strength that even resident European merchants believed that it was impossible to capture.

In anticipation of hostilities, the government of Rangoon had further strengthened the Golden Pagoda by distributing twenty-five guns of large calibre in various parts of the building. To crown all, a wall fifteen feet high and twelve feet thick, had been built behind the stockade.

On the 12th April the H. E. I. Company's steamers and H. M. gunboats opened fire on the Golden Pagoda.

The greatest importance was attached to the capture of the Pagoda, as it was thought that its fall would convince every Buddhist in India of the hopelessness of opposing the British.

Although the Burmese had not forgotten the thrashing they had previously incurred at our hands, they had not the slightest anticipation of a fresh defeat, for was not the celebrated Burmese guard known as the "Immortals of the Golden Country," with them. How could they lose when the discipline of these redoubtable warriors compelled them to die at their posts?

To further equalise matters and to increase the courage of his other soldiers, the Burmese king had seized the wives of the married men and publicly announced that he should hold them as hostages for their husbands doing their duty. The single men were either chained by the artful monarch to the guns at the fort or tied to their married companions.

Long before our troops arrived we learnt how formidable were the preparations for our reception. But our men prepared to accomplish the task set before them with their usual dogged thoroughness. In fact, they were so little dismayed that to get what they call their hand in they first took the forts, rushing them one after the other in the coolest possible manner.

After the coast defences had all been blown up these indomitable fighters then turned their attention to Rangoon.

Whether it was the fierce cheering or the deadly rushes, the courage of the Burmese sunk to so low an ebb that when one of the storming parties broke in a city gate some of the gunners fastened to the guns fainted. The rest of the garrison scampered out on the opposite side of the town and made straight for the Golden Pagoda, where by this time an enormous force had collected to prevent the ruins of their beloved Temple from being desecrated by the barbarian.

As soon as we arrived at the famous shrine we set about destroying the great wall in order to get at the

force behind, but the debris was so great that but for a timely supply of scaling ladders we should never have succeeded in getting to the other side.

To drop from the summit of a lofty wall into the midst of dense masses of infuriated natives filled with the hope of killing, before they died; those sacrilegious dogs, the British, was not a pleasant prospect. But our men recked nothing of the danger. They mounted the wall and jumped into the seething mass below as if it were an ordinary every day occurrence. But once down they took good care to keep the enemy back till they were joined by more.

What the British cannot accomplish in war has yet to be discovered. At one time on that eventful day 20 of them kept 500 Burmese at bay. "The Immortals of the Golden Country," true to their traditions, fought when confronted by our red-coats and died at their posts; in fact the carnage was so dreadful that had not the Elder Brother of China been lulled into security by the flatteries of his wives he would have hastened to make peace.

After we had killed all the "Immortals of the Golden Country," the army, being supremely contented with itself, rested.

In the autumn of 1852 they started afresh, their next achievement being the capture of the city of Prome. This gave us the command of the river to the royal capital which had, for a long time, been on short commons on account of our blockade of the Irrawady.

Pegu was the next town that fell into our hands. The garrison evinced the greatest boldness till Mr. Atkins was seen to be marching steadily, not to say stolidly, on the city, when they fled. As the infatuated Emperor still refused to treat, and as the inhabitants of Ava were terribly afraid of their city being desecrated by the presence of a barbarian army, they deposed their ruler and placed his brother on the throne, and he at once proceeded to make terms with the conquerors.

On April 4th, 1853, the Burmese Commissioners and our representative met at Prome and concluded a treaty, the terms of which, it is safe to say, are already shaping the course of events in China. Lord Dalhousie must have been a statesman of the most extraordinary foresight, for his sole aim when drawing up the treaty seems to have been a desire to secure us against covetous designs the French might harbour in the future against Southern China.

Our representatives were instructed to insist on the cession of the whole of the coast line with Pegu and Martaban. The Burmese were against Pegu alone comprised an area of 40,000 square miles and a population of three million persons. Sir Arthur Phayre gave the king forty-eight hours to consider, and next day held a review of the troops, the quality of our men so impressing the king that he agreed, providing he was allowed to cede the land by letter and not by treaty. This was agreed to, and peace was restored on June 30th, 1853.

We now held four provinces. In 1862 these were all welded into British Burmah. The existence of British Burmah has brought so much of the surrounding country within the sphere of British influence that when the increasing decay of France has weakened her Colonial policy there will be no competition to share with us free access to the richest districts of Southern China.

[NEXT WEEK: The British Legion in Spain, 1835-1837.]



"I COULD kill him!"

The words were uttered in a fierce, hoarse whisper. The speaker was a short man, whose form indicated great strength; his countenance did not betoken any great intelligence, but gave evidence of a violent temper—a man who might be led into wrong-doing or crime out of sheer defiance or obstinacy, a man who regarded every little cross in life as an act expressly directed by fate against himself.

He was a Hungarian with a dash of Italian blood. He lived in a small village in the south of Austria, where he carried on the not very lucrative business of a shoe-maker. He rented a small cottage from the chief man of the village, an individual whose character was by no means good and who seemed to be gifted with that peculiar quality which delights in making things hard for other people.

Nicolas Gebor, the shoe-maker, had suffered from this peculiarity of his landlord; it was not an easy task to make both ends meet, so Gebor was usually behind with his rent, and he never had any rest until it was paid. Gebor noticed, or fancied that he noticed, that his landlord seized every opportunity of making life harder for him—and everyone who knows anything of rural life, even in our own country, will understand what this means.

Gebor had a daughter, Minna, a girl of about nineteen, whose youthful affections had been set upon a promising young man of the same village—a young fellow who was working his way up steadily to the position of a small proprietor; but here again the hand of Nadar made itself felt. The promised husband of Minna found it impossible to realise his ambition, owing to the opposition of Nadar, and had to leave the village for another part of the country in order to try his luck.

But that was not quite all. Morai went away from his native village under a cloud; a robbery had been committed at the house of Nadar and Morai was accused of the crime. However, in spite of the influence of Nadar, the theft could not be proved against the young fellow; all the evidence that could be adduced amounted to little more than the fact that the stolen article had been missed immediately after a visit paid by Morai to Nadar on the subject of the farm which the former wished to acquire.

But Nadar's influence, although it could not secure the conviction, was sufficient to induce people to point the finger of scorn at both Morai and the shoe-maker's

daughter. This was not a difficult task, for both the young people appeared to be above the ordinary run of the villagers; and small minded people usually resent that kind of thing; however much you may be above them in reality and however modest you may be, your natural difference excites their envy and malice.

As a matter of fact, Nadar had set his eye upon Minna and wanted her for himself, but this proposition had been rejected by Minna and her father with a unanimity that was surprising so far as Gebor himself was concerned, considering what a good match it would have been and how easily his own difficulties would have been smoothed away thereby.

Gebor was led to give utterance to the words just quoted by the desperate position in which he found himself. Morai had been driven from the village with a stain on his character, the stain of a charge that could be neither proved nor disproved; Gebor himself, having spent all he possessed and having pledged some of his goods and his credit, in order to provide for the defence of Morai, whose own savings had also been swallowed up, was unable to pay his rent and was threatened with eviction; while during the past day or two, a rumour had been circulated concerning Minna which had nearly driven the old man mad.

"It is all his doing! I could kill him!"

This time Gebor's words came more fiercely. He would probably have continued his audible mutterings had not a hand been placed on his shoulder and a voice said:

"Hush, father!"

Gebor turned with a start, his face distorted with rage and fear; he heaved a sigh of relief when he found that it was his daughter who confronted him. So deep had been his meditation that he had not recognised the voice or understood the words.

"Don't say such wicked things, father!" cried Minna, clasping her hands and looking appealingly at him. "You make me frightened. It will all come right some day, God will see that everything is made clear."

"Yes, yes, yes!" muttered the old man in a shame-faced manner, avoiding her gaze. "Don't take any notice of what I say, Minna, it's only my—joking."

"Then don't joke any more like that, father, but come and have some dinner," said the girl, trying to assume a bright aspect in order to cheer her father. "It isn't much, but it tastes very nice and it will do you good. Come along!" And, taking him by the arm, she led him into the little kitchen where the poor repast was ready.

Gebor was silent during the first part of the meal, but became more cheerful, apparently, towards the finish. But he did not eat much and retired to his little workshop as soon as he could.

There was no work for him to do just then and this gave him another opportunity of following the unpleasant train of thought which had been interrupted by his daughter.

Why should this man have it in his power to do so much mischief? Why should any man have such power? Nations had from time to time thrown off the yoke of the one who was ruling them with too severe a hand, and this as often as regarded as a meritorious action and as patriotism; the people of a country submitted to such a yoke only so long as they were too weak to strike a blow against it. Was it not just to say that what was good for a whole nation was good for one village also? Would not their own village be better if Nadar were removed? It was not possible to depose this man as a king would be deposed, but—in some countries the ruler had paid for his misdeeds with his life! With his life!

The words seemed to sink into the mind of Gebor and to haunt him. He could not get rid of them; he saw them in letters of fire all round his workshop, no matter which way he looked, and as the darkness came on, so they shone more brightly.

Was it wicked to rid the world of such a monster? Surely not. It was not right that this man should make life miserable for everyone else; he could not believe that to rid the world of Nadar would be to incur the penalty meted out to ordinary criminals who took life in order to rob. No, no! Such an act as that which something was now whispering to him to commit was a different thing entirely, a justifiable deed.

He brooded over this until darkness enveloped him. He had a vague idea that his daughter had looked in during the afternoon to remind him that she was going to the next village on an errand—to take home some work which she had been doing—and that she would not be home till late; she had said something about his not forgetting his tea. But Gebor had not thought of tea; he had thought of nothing except Nadar.

Then there seemed to be a blank, and after this interval his thoughts became active again and stirred him to deeds. Suppose he killed Nadar? How quiet it was! His cottage was in a lonely part—suppose Nadar were to call on him and badger him for the rent, as he had done before, just out of pure devilment? No one would know; the hated landlord would disappear!

Again there was a blank, and then a knock at the door. Before Gebor could rise to open it, the head and shoulders of Nadar appeared.

"Remember, if I don't have it by to-morrow mid-day, out you go—you and that daughter of yours and all your sticks!"

Gebor restrained his rising anger and asked Nadar to come in.

"I have a word to say to you, respected sir," he explained in his humblest tones. "It is about the rent. Come in and shut the door, it is cold outside."

There was just enough light from the moon to enable the two men to see each other dimly. Nadar came in and shut the door.

"Sitting without a light so as to save your money to pay me, eh?" asked Nadar with a sneer. "What is it? Be quick, for I have no time to waste!"

Gebor approached him with a deferential attitude, but Nadar waved him back.

"Get a light. I don't care to stand in this infernal place without a lamp. Be quick or I won't wait. Do —"

That was his last word, for Gebor sprang at him and gripped him by the throat. Without a sound Nadar went down with a crash, Gebor still digging his fingers into the throat of the tyrant, the man who had injured him so deeply. Nadar struggled strongly, but he was no match for his opponent, who held him until the struggling ceased. The deed was done and the village was free of the oppressor.

Gebor rose and lighted a candle. He was full of exultation; he would not be turned out of his home, for some time must elapse before anything could be done by the heir, whoever he might be, and that would give Gebor a chance of raking the money together. How everyone would rejoice!

He bent over the body and surveyed the face by the light of his candle; then there came a gradual change of feeling and exultation began to give place to remorse and fear.

What right had he to usurp the functions of the law or the prerogative of the Almighty? All the glamour that had filled him when thinking of national rebellions had now disappeared, and he saw his crime in its true light. He was a murderer, one who had taken life to evade the payment of a just debt. It was a just debt, for he owed the money and admitted the fact, and although his landlord had threatened him with harsh treatment, yet that was no excuse for so horrible a crime.

Two blacks do not make a white; hard dealing on the part of Nadar was by no means a sufficient reason for the committal of a murder.

Now Gebor began to realise the full consequences of what he had done.

"They will drag me away to prison and hang me!" he muttered, clenching his hands in terror. "Minna will be laughed at, she will be pointed at as the daughter of a murderer. Minna's heart will be broken when she learns that her father, whom she loves so dearly, is to go to the gallows! My dead wife is looking down upon me from above with horror. I can never expect that, or the punishment that will come hereafter, but—yes, yes!—there may be a chance of escaping the hangman and avoiding the disgrace for Minna. I must hide the body; I must get rid of it at once. I must carry it far away from here, so as to avoid suspicion. The gallows! I can feel—No, no! Anything but that; I cannot go through that!"

His voice rose to a shriek with the last word; his whole body trembled with fear so that he could scarcely keep upright.

Every time the window shook as the wind blew against it, Gebor started and uttered a cry of terror. He stood in the middle of the room and dared not make a step in any direction lest he should find himself in the grasp of someone who had come to denounce him, and hand him over to the representatives of justice.

He knew that he must act promptly in order to hide what he had done, yet he had not the strength to move. Although he tried to keep his eyes averted from the ghastly thing that lay on the floor, he was obliged to look at it; the distorted face seemed to be still alive, and to be leering at him.

His eyes were riveted to that face until his agony of terror nearly overturned his reason; with a cry more like that of a savage beast than of a human being, he at last made a desperate plunge at the body, lifted it in

his strong arms, threw it across his shoulder and staggered with his burden into the open.

He must take it away without being seen—anywhere, anywhere! His strength came back to him now that he was outside, for he understood that he might be seen and that in order to avoid such a catastrophe he must be quick to fulfil his mission.

He hurried along almost at a run, taxing his strength to the utmost, until his breath came thick and fast and the perspiration stood on his forehead in spite of the keen cold air of the autumn night. On, on! he could not go fast enough to outstrip his own fears; at frequent intervals he looked back to make sure he was not being followed, but although he could see nothing, he was not convinced.

He chose the loneliest paths leading to the open country, but he started and occasionally almost stumbled at the ordinary night sounds. At last, quite exhausted, he reached a stream and into the calm water he threw his burden.

He was home again without being seen and just a few minutes before his daughter returned. She reproached him gently for not having had his tea, and prepared a supper for him, of which he ate but little, and did not enjoy in the least.

The next morning there was a sensation in the village, for Nadar had vanished—gone without leaving a trace behind him. All that was known was that he had set out in the afternoon for a walk across country—a favourite form of recreation with him—and had not been seen since. Inquiries were made, and it was discovered that he had left the town eight miles off, in order to return home, just after nightfall. But all else remained shrouded in mystery.

Gebor's idea, that he would be allowed to rest in peace, was not realised; the order had been given by Nadar, and as the money was not forthcoming, the shoemaker and his daughter were turned out. They succeeded in getting one of the villagers to take them in for the time, while their few belongings were stored in the yard. So far as he was concerned, therefore, Gebor's crime was no benefit.

But this failure had scarcely any effect upon him, he was too absorbed by the fear of detection, and by remorse. Nadar haunted him not only in his waking hours, but also in his sleep. He scarcely dared go out by himself; he insisted on his daughter accompanying him. He dreamt that awful scene over and over again, starting up in his sleep with a shriek as he fancied that the face of Nadar, with that leer upon it, was looking at him from the end of his bed.

Everywhere he saw that dread object which he had carried from his workshop to the stream; whenever he passed by a ditch or any hollow place that figure appeared to bob into sight and point an accusing finger at him.

He grew pale and thin; he wasted at an incredibly fast rate, and he himself recognised that he could not live long under such conditions. Truly, the vengeance of Heaven was overtaking him.

Three days after, there came the intelligence which he had expected—Nadar's body was discovered, half on the banks and half in the stream. Nadar had risen from the grave, so to speak, in order to accuse him. And on the body, so the report ran, was found something that must lead to the detection of the murderer.

"My time has come!" exclaimed Gebor to himself when this rumour reached him. "In an hour or two they will be here to drag me to prison and to the gallows!

I cannot face it; I cannot face my daughter's grief and her abhorrence! I must kill myself before they come!"

He looked about the little room which had been set apart for the accommodation of himself and his daughter; there was a beam and he might hang himself. He recognised that it was a just punishment; it was the death he had dealt out to his victim. Even as he looked at the beam he heard footsteps coming up the rickety stairs—they were coming for him! He glared about him like a wild beast seeking a way of escape; there was no time to carry out his intention of destroying himself.

He hastened to the little window and threw it open. If he could drop to the ground he might evade the officers of the law for just long enough to check them. He knelt upon the sill, but a hand grasped him and shook him. He screamed in his terror, then—

"Father, what is the matter?" He heard the voice of his daughter as though from a long distance. "What ails you? You have fallen asleep, and had a bad dream, is that it? Poor dear, I ought not to have left you, but I am back now, and we will have supper. I see you have had no tea."

"Nadar?" gasped the shoemaker, clutching his daughter. "Tell me, is he alive? I thought—Oh, thank Heaven it is not real!" and he sank back again on his stool and wept like a child.

Minna wanted to know all about it, and when her father had thoroughly realized that he had fallen asleep while brooding over his misfortunes and wrongs, and that this awful experience was but a dream, he told her briefly what he had gone through.

"I am glad for your sake, dear father," said Minna with tears in her eyes, "that Heaven has been pleased to teach you this lesson in such a way. I have been afraid for you, I dreaded that you might do something for which we should all be sorry, and ever since I heard you utter those wicked words this morning I have been uneasy. We are in great trouble, but a wicked action of any kind will not help us—sooner or later we shall suffer for it. We must bear our troubles bravely, and all will be well one day."

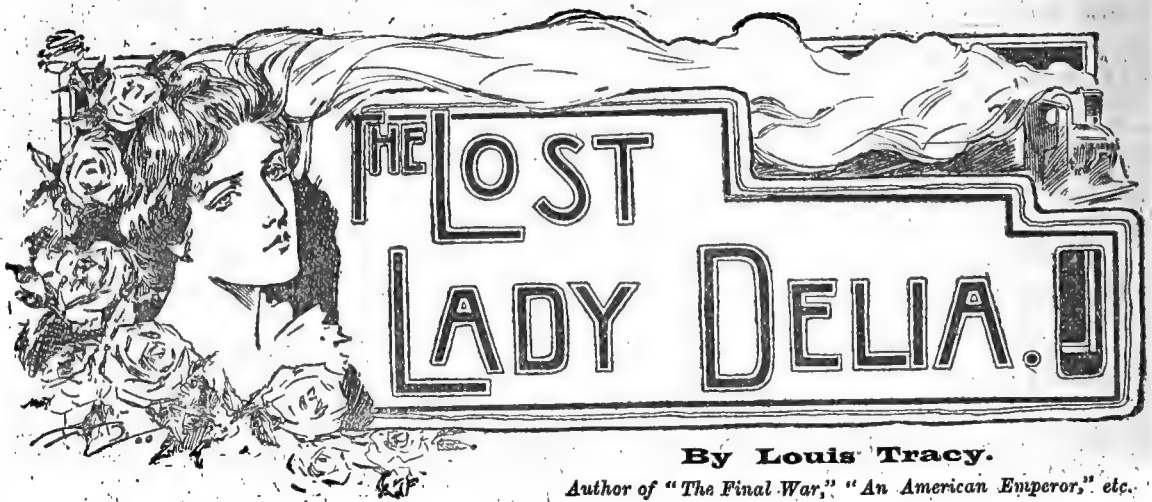
It is not an uncommon experience in life that light comes just when we are giving up hope that the darkness will ever vanish, and thus it was with Gebor.

On the following day the villagers heard that Nadar was ill. Gebor was left undisturbed in his little home for several weeks, as his landlord's illness proved to be of such a serious nature that his life was despaired of for a time, and he was kept to his bed and his room for more than two months. Work came in more briskly to the old shoemaker, while Minna and the banished Moria were able to earn and save a little, thus it happened that the rent was ready when Nadar was sufficiently recovered to make applications for it. But to the surprise of Gebor, he was sent for by Nadar and his money returned to him.

"Gebor, I have been to the very gate of death, and when a man is face to face with death his opinions undergo a change," said Nadar gravely, not noticing that Gebor shivered. "I have not dealt fairly by you and yours; let me make it up to you now. You may tell it where you please that I have wronged you, and that I have found the missing article which Morai was thought to have stolen. Tell him to come back and he shall have a farm as a present from me!"

Gebor stammered a few words of thanks, then fell on his knees and raised a prayer to Heaven that he himself had been saved from a great sin.

GEORGE DAY.



READ THIS BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

LADY DELIA LYLE leaves her house one foggy November afternoon, saying she is going to see her sister at Richmond, but from that time she is not heard of.

Her husband, Sir Charles Lyle, puts the matter into the hands of detectives, Inspector Winter taking charge of the case.

Reginald Brett, a barrister friend of the Lyles, also promises to do all he can, and he finds out that Lady Delia, on the night of her disappearance, instead of going to Richmond, alighted at Sloane Square, and went to a block of flats called Raleigh Mansions.

Towards the end of the month the body of a woman, evidently murdered, is found wedged beneath a drain-pipe in the Thames at Putney, and, though Sir Charles does not identify the body, Brett imagines it to be that of Lady Delia. Shortly after this discovery Lady Delia's maid, Jane Harding, disappears. She is afterwards found to have gone on the stage.

Brett now starts investigations at Raleigh Mansions, and he fixes on two residents there as being likely to have been connected with Lady Delia. These are a Mr. Sydney H. Pyne, who is not at present in residence, and a Mrs. Hillmer, whom he finds to be Pyne's sister.

It had transpired that Pyne had gone to Monte Carlo, and thither Brett goes, and he discovers that though letters are addressed to Pyne at the Hotel du Cercle, he is not known there.

During his stay at Monte Carlo Brett becomes acquainted with an Englishman, named Albert Mensmore, whom he helps out of some money difficulties, but he does not discover anything about Pyne.

After his return Brett finds out that Sir Charles Lyle knows Albert Mensmore, but in what connection does not transpire.

A few days later Brett goes into the City, to the office of Dodge and Co., with whom he had had some speculative dealings, and from remarks made by Mr. Dodge, he thinks that Pyne and Mensmore must be one and the same man. In the evening Brett and Winter go to Raleigh Mansions and search the flat occupied by Pyne. Brett finds that a piece of one of the fire-dogs is missing, and that it exactly corresponds with the piece of iron which was found imbedded in the head of the body found at Putney.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. HILLMER HESITATES.

"I WONDER if I shall have such exciting times to-day as I had yesterday," said Brett to himself, as he unfolded his *Times* next morning at breakfast.

Affairs had so jumbled themselves together in his brain the previous evening that he had abandoned all effort to elucidate them. He retired to rest earlier than usual, to sleep soundly, save for a vivid dream in which he was being tried for his life, the chief witnesses against him being Mrs. Hillmer, Phyllis Browne, and Jane Harding, the latter varying her evidence by entertaining the Court with a song and dance.

The weather, too, had improved. It was clear, frosty, and sunlit—one of those delightful days of winter that serve as cheerful remembrances during periods of seemingly interminable fog overhead and slush beneath.

During a quiet meal he read the news, and, with the

invaluable morning smoke, settled himself cosily into an armchair to consider procedure.

In the first place, he carefully weighed those utterances of Mensmore at Monte Carlo, which he could recall, and which seemed, by the light of later knowledge, to bear upon the case.

Mensmore had alluded to "family troubles," to "worries," and "anxieties," that practically drove him from England. Some of these, no doubt, referred to the Springbok speculation. Others, again, might have meant Mrs. Hillmer or some presently unknown relative. But in Mensmore's manner there was nothing that savoured of greater secrecy than the natural reticence a gentleman has in discussing domestic affairs with a stranger.

This man had practically been snatched from death. At such a moment it was inconceivable that he could cloak the remorse of a murderer by the simulation of more honourable motives, in themselves sufficiently distressing to cause him to deliberately choose suicide as the best way of ending his difficulties.

The policeman had summarised the testimony against Pyne as insufficient to curtail the remarkable powers of endurance of a cat. But to Brett the case against Mensmore, alias Pyne, stood in clearer outline. Now that he could calmly reason the matter he felt that the balance of probabilities swung away from the hypothesis that Mensmore was the actual slayer of Lady Delia, and towards the theory that he was in some way bound up with her death, whether knowingly or unknowingly it was at present impossible to say.

The new terror to Brett was Mr. Winter.

"Why, if that animated truncheon knew all that I know of this business he would arrest Mensmore forthwith! If he did, what would result? A scandal, a thorough exposure, possibly the ruin of Mensmore's love-making if he be an innocent man. That must be stopped. But how? Without forewarning Mensmore himself—and he may be guilty. Chance may favour Winter, as it favoured me, in disclosing the identity of the missing Pyne. And what of the *real* Pyne? What on earth has he got to do with it, and why has Mensmore taken his name? If ever I get to the bottom of this business I may well congratulate myself. The sole result of all my labour thus far may be summed up in a sentence—I have not yet come face to face with the man whom I can honestly suspect as Lady Delia's murderer. Not much, my boy!"

Reggie uttered the last sentence aloud, startling Smith, who was clearing the table.

"Beg pardon, sir," cried Smith.

"Oh, nothing. I was only expressing an opinion."

"I thought, perhaps, sir, you was thinkin' of Mr. Winter."

"What of him?"

"Your remark, sir, hexactly hexpresses my hopinion of 'im."

Smith was not a badly educated man, but the least excitement produced an appalling derangement of the letter "h" in his vocabulary.

"Mr. Winter is all right in his own way, Smith."

"Maybe, but why should he come pokin' round 'ere pryin' into your little affairs-decur?"

"My what?"

"Sorry, sir, but that's what a French maid I once knew called 'em. Flirtations, sir. Mashies."

"Smith, have you been drinking?"

"Me, sir?"

"Well, explain yourself. I never flirted with a woman in my life."

"That's what I told 'im, sir. 'My master's a regular saint,' says I, 'a sort of middle-aged ankyrite.' But Mr. Winter 'e wouldn't 'ave it at no price. 'Come now, Smith,' says 'e, 'your guv'nor's pretty deep. 'E's a toff, 'e is, an' knows lots of lydies—titled lydies.' 'Very like,' says I, 'but 'e doesn't mash 'em.' 'Then what price that lydy who called for 'im in a keb afore 'e went away? An' who's 'e gone to Monte Carlo with?' This was during your hab-sence, sir."

"Go on, Smith. Anything else?"

"Well, sir, that rather flung me out of my stride, as the sayin' is, as I 'ad seen the lydy in question. An' Mr. Winter 'as a nasty way of putting you on your oath, so to speak. But I never owned up."

Brett laughed.

"Excellent. Mr. Winter has a keen nose for false scents. I have already told him to leave my affairs alone. He means no harm."

But the reference to a "lydy in a keb" had suggested an immediate plan of action to the barrister. He would call and see Mrs. Hillmer. He wrote a note asking her if he might come to tea that afternoon, and sent it by a boy messenger.

In return he received this answer:

"Mrs. Hillmer will be at home at four o'clock if Mr. Brett cares to call then."

"Phew!" whistled Reggie. "What's in the wind there? This is an uncommonly stiff invitation. That rascal Winter has upset her, I'll be bound. I must choke him off somehow. Suppose he were to find that damaged bracket! He would have Mensmore under trial at the Old Bailey in double-quick time. After I leave Mrs. Hillmer I must visit No. 12 again and carry off the pair of brackets before Winter discovers them, as he will haunt the place in future."

Brett had a set of skeleton keys in his possession.

They were in his pocket when he approached Raleigh Mansions at the appointed hour.

The same trim maid opened the door for him and ushered him into the drawing-room. On the occasion of his first visit he was taken to the dining-room. It was a small matter, but Brett paid heed to such.

Mrs. Hillmer appeared, very stately and undemonstrative. She greeted Brett coldly, seated herself at a distance, and said, in a cold, well-controlled voice:—

"I did not expect the honour of another visit from you, Mr. Brett."



"Not much, my boy!" Reggie uttered the last sentence aloud, startling Smith, who was clearing the table.

"Why not?" There was a fight brewing, and he would let the enemy open fire, for the glitter in her eyes showed that the batteries were ready to be unmasked. He was not mistaken.

"Why not? Because I believed you to be a gentleman. Once you had stooped to sending your myrmidons to pester me I imagined that you would yourself keep in the back-ground."

There was an indignant ring in her words as she concluded. When a woman is angry her own speech acts as a trumpet-call and fires her blood. Mrs. Hillmer began, as she intended, in icy disdain. She ended in tremulous anger.

"You allude to Mr. Winter," said the barrister, looking steadily at her.

"Yes, that is the man. Some hiring from Scotland Yard. How could you so meanly induce my confidence at our first meeting? I have never been so deceived in a man in my life, and I have had a surfeit of bitter experience already."

"Brother and sister are alike. They have led queer lives," mused Brett. Aloud he said:

"Your experience, Mrs. Hillmer, should at least lead you not to condemn any one unheard. May I explain that which is to you incomprehensible at this moment?—justly so, I must admit."

"Explanations! I am a child in the hands of such as you. How can I hope to fathom your real intent? Pre-

sumably, if I accept your apologies now, it will be a prelude to further visits by impudent police officers."

"I am not here to apologise, Mrs. Hillmer."

"What then, pray?"

"To plead with you. For Heaven's sake do not distrust me. It may ruin those whom you hold dear. Listen to me first, and try to believe me afterwards."

Brett was so thoroughly in earnest, so impressive in manner, that the other did not know what to make of him. In her despair she adopted a woman's chief resource—her eyes filled with tears.

But Brett anticipated her. "Now, Mrs. Hillmer," he cried, "let us act like sensible people. Compose yourself. order in some tea, and after an interlude I will tell you all about it. Candour is an indispensable element of confidence."

Mrs. Hillmer rose, made an effort to choke back her agitation, went out, and called to the maid for tea. She returned in a few moments. When they were alone Brett said, with a smile:

"A little *poudre de riz* is an excellent corrective for signs of grief."

The lady blushed, and there was a perceptible return to her former pleasant manner.

"You are incorrigible, I fear, Mr. Brett," she cried.

"Not a bit. Impressionable, rather. Now, I am going to startle you considerably, so be prepared. And do not jump at conclusions. Though startling, my news is not alarming. All may yet end well."

Mrs. Hillmer was manifestly anxious, but she promised to try and understand him fully before she formed any judgment.

"Then," said Brett, "I can clear the air a good deal by a simple statement. Mr. Winter is no agent of mine, and I have seen your brother, Albert Mensmore, at Monte Carlo."

Mrs. Hillmer gave a little gasp of surprise. "You have seen Bertie?"

"Yes; your brother, is he not?"

"My half-brother, to be exact. My father was married twice. I—I am the elder of the two by four years."

"Apart from the compliment, you do not look it. But what you say explains the almost total absence of likeness between you."

"Possibly. People said we each resembled our mother. And Bertie, you know, has led a somewhat adventurous career. He roughed it a good deal in America. But what has all this got to do with detectives, and recent inquiries, and that sort of thing?"

"Much. The last time we met I told you that your brother was mixed up in some affair with a lady."

Mrs. Hillmer laughed, a trifle constrainedly. "If you knew Bertie as well as I do, you would not harbour suspicions concerning him. He never had a love affair in his life. Indeed, he is something of a woman-hater."

"No doubt he was. But he has changed his opinions. He is in love, and is engaged to be married to a very charming girl. So far, his beliefs and his good fortune have pulled against each other."

"Bertie engaged to be married! Good gracious! Who is she? And how can he support a wife? He is poor, and in debt, and he won't even let me help him."

"I have stated the facts, nevertheless. The lady is a daughter of Sir William Browne, and they are now yachting with a large party in the Mediterranean."

"Are her people against the match? Is that why this Scotland Yard man—?"

"No. Mensmore is on board Sir William's yacht. But there is another lady, who is missing from her home for nearly three months, who is believed to be dead—murdered, the police say—and with whom your brother was in some indefinable way associated."

"Do they dare to say that Bertie killed her?" Mrs. Hillmer's colour rose and her eyes flashed fire again.

"They say nothing. They are simply doing their duty in trying to discover the truth. And you may take it from me, as an undoubted fact, that the last place this lady visited before her death was one of the flats in these mansions. All present indications point to your brother's residence as being that place. Now, I pray you, be calm, and try to help me, for I have acted in this matter as your friend and as your brother's friend. At this very moment I am concealing his identity and his whereabouts from the police, who are searching for him under his assumed name of Pyne. If he is guilty of this crime, then I must hand him over to justice, for the murdered woman was a dear



"Now, Mrs. Hillmer," he began; but she broke in vehemently, running to him and clutching him by the arm.

and good friend of mine. If he is innocent, as, indeed, I believe him to be, I will strive to help him and save his good name from the tarnish of being arrested on such an odious charge."

During this recital Mrs. Hillmer became deathly pale. Her agitation was the greater inasmuch as she forcibly controlled herself. But she could not remain seated. She sprang to the window and looked out, in the vain effort to seek inspiration from the gathering gloom of the street. Then she turned, and spoke very slowly:

"I think I understand. I must have faith in you, Mr. Brett. Who—was—the lady?"

The barrister thought deeply before replying. He had previously decided upon this supreme step, but he hesitated now that it was imminent. There was no help for it.

"Her name," he said, "is one which is well known to the world. Lady Delia Lyle, wife of Sir Charles Lyle, is missing from her home since the evening of Nov. 6 last. She met with a violent death that night, and I—not the police—have good reason to believe that she was killed in your brother's residence."

Mrs. Hillmer flung herself on a lounge, buried her white face in her hands and moaned, in a perfect agony of terror: "Oh, my God; what shall I do?—What shall I do?"

This outburst astounded Brett. He did not know what to make of it. His intelligence had certainly taken his hearer completely by surprise. What interpretation was he to place upon her words and her unrestrained actions?

"Now, Mrs. Hillmer," he began; but she broke in vehemently, running to him and clutching him by the arm: "He is innocent, Mr. Brett. He *must* be innocent. He could not lift his hand to any woman. You must save him—do you hear?—save him, or you will have his blood on your soul. It was true, then, that you came here to hunt for him. Save him, if you hope for mercy yourself when you are dying."

In her passion she shook him violently, and for an instant they looked intently at each other—the woman eager, entreating; the man amazed and questioning.

"Do you not see," Reggie said at last, "that your vehemence reveals your thoughts? For anything that you know to the contrary, your brother may have committed this crime. Nay, it requires but slight knowledge

of human nature to read your suspicion lest it be true. At this moment I am convinced that you are, in your heart, less sceptical than I of his guilt."

Mrs. Hillmer flung herself again upon the lounge, silent, tearful, torn with violent emotion, which she vainly endeavoured to suppress.

Brett tried to reason with her: "It will, perhaps, serve to clear up a mystery that deepens each moment if you place your trust in me," he said. "Tell me fully and openly any cause you may have for fearing that your brother is implicated in this terrible business. I ask you to adopt this course in all good faith. I have seen your brother under most trying circumstances; I have been with him at an hour when it would be impossible for him to conceal his burden if the weight of Lady Delia's death lay upon him. Yet I think him innocent. I think that chance has contributed to gather evidence against him. If I can learn even a portion of the truth it will enable me to quickly dispel the barrier of uncertainty that now hinders progress."

"What is it you want to know?" Mrs. Hillmer's voice was hoarse and broken. The barrister was shocked at the effect of his revelation, but he was forced to go on with the disagreeable task he had undertaken.

"Do you mean," he said, "that you will answer my questions?"

"So far as I can." "Would it not be better to tell me in your own words what you have to say?"

Mrs. Hillmer looked up, and the agony in her face filled him with keen pity.

"Oh, Heaven help me to do what is right!" she cried. "Your prayer will surely be answered. I am certain of that. A great wrong has been committed by some one, and the innocent must not suffer to shield the guilty."

Mrs. Hillmer bowed her head and did not utter a word for some minutes. She appeared to be reasoning out some plan of action in a dazed fashion. When decision came she said in low tones:

"You must leave me now, Mr. Brett. I must have time. When I am ready I shall send for you."

Brett instinctively knew that it was hopeless to plead with her. Frivolous, volatile women of her stamp often betray unusual strength of character at a supreme crisis.



Two or three assailants flung themselves upon him.

"You are adopting an unwise course," he said sadly.
 "Maybe. But I must go alone. I am not deceiving you. When I have determined something which is not now clear to me, I will send for you. It may be that I shall speak. It may be that I shall be silent. In either case I only can judge—and suffer."

"Tell me one thing at least, Mrs. Hillmer, before we part. Did you know of Lady Delia's death before to-day?"

She came to him again, looked him straight in the face, and said: "I did not. On my soul, I did not."

Then Brett passed into the hall; and even the shock of this painful interview did not prevent him from noting the flitting of a shadow past a distant doorway, as some one hurried into the interior of a room.

In their excitement they forgot that their voices might attract attention, and lady's maids are proverbially inquisitive.

CHAPTER XVI.

FOXLEY.

THE keen, cold air of the streets soon restored Reggie to his habitual calm. He felt that a quiet stroll would do him good.

As he walked he pondered, and the more critically he examined Mrs. Hillmer's change of attitude the less he understood it.

"For some ridiculous reason," he communed, "the woman believes her brother guilty. Now I shall have endless trouble at getting at the truth. She will not be candid. She will only tell me that which she thinks will help him, and conceal that which she considers damaging. That is a woman's way all the world over. And a desperately annoying way it is. Perhaps I was to blame in springing this business too hastily upon her. But there! I like Mrs. Hillmer, and I hate using her as one juggles with a self-conceited witness. In future I will trouble her no more."

A casual glance into the interior of Sloane-square Station gave him a glimpse of the barrier, and he recognised the collector who had taken Lady Delia's ticket on that fatal night when she quitted the Richmond train.

Rather as a relief than for other cause Brett entered into conversation with the man:

"Do you remember me?" he said.

"Can't say as I do, sir." The man examined his questioner with quick suspicion. The forgotten "season" dodge would not work with him.

"Maybe you remember these?" said Brett, producing his cigar case.

"Now, wot's the gyne?" said the collector to himself. But he smiled, and answered: "Do you mean by the look of 'em, sir?"

"Good," laughed Brett. "Take three or four home with you. Meanwhile, I am sure you remember me coming to see you last November concerning a lady who alighted here from Victoria one foggy evening and handed you a ticket to Richmond?"

"Of course I does, sir. And the cigars are all right. There was a lot of fuss about that lady. Did she ever turn up?"

"Not exactly. That is to say, she died shortly after you saw her."

"No! Well, of all the rummy goes! She was a fine looking woman, too, as well as I recollect. Looked fit for another fifty year. Wot appened to her?"

"I don't know. I wish I did."

"An' ave you been on the hunt ever since, gov'nor?"

"Yes, ever since."

"She's dead, you s'y?"

"Yes."

"But 'ow d'you know she's dead, if you ain't seen her since?"

"I have seen her. I saw her dead body at Putney."

"At Putney! Well, I'm blowed!"

A roar from beneath, the slamming of many doors, and the quick rush of a crowd up the steps, announced the arrival of a train. "Pardon, sir," said the man, "this is the 5.41 Mansion House. But don't go aw'y. There's somethin'—Tickets, if you please."

In a minute the collector had ended his task. While sorting his bundle of pasteboards he said:—

"Nobody ever tell'd me that before. An' you ain't the only one on her track. Are you in the police?"

"No."

"I thought not. But some other chaps who kem 'ere was. None of 'em ever said the lady was dead."

"Why; what matter?"

"Oh, nothin', but two heads is better'n one, if they're only sheep's heads."

"Undoubtedly. The rule is all the more reliable when one of them belongs to a shrewd chap like you."

The collector grinned. He understood that he was being flattered for a purpose, yet he liked it.

"That's one w'y of lookin' at it," he said; "but if this affair's pertickler, why, all I can s'y is it's worth somethin' to somebody."

"Certainly. Here's a sovereign for a start. If you can tell me anything really worth knowing I will add four more to it."

"Now, that's talkin'. I'm off duty at eight o'clock, an' I can't have a chat now because I expect the inspector any moment."

"Suppose you call and see me in Victoria Street at nine?"

"Right you are, sir."

Brett gave the man his address and recrossed the square. No one was about, so he walked straight to the first door of Raleigh Mansions and made his way to the fourth floor.

Had he been a moment later he must have seen Mrs. Hillmer, closely wrapped up, leave her residence unattended. Her carriage was not in waiting. She walked to the cabstand in the square and called a hansom, driving back up Sloane-street.

Her actions indicated a desire to be unobserved even by her servants, as in the usual course of events the housemaid would have brought a cab to the door.

But the barrister, steadily climbing up the stairs, could not guess what was happening in the street.

He soon opened Mensmore's door, and noted, as an idle fact, that the expected gust of cold air was absent.

There was no light on this landing, so he was in pitch darkness once he had passed the doorway. There was no need to strike a match, however, as he remembered the exact position of the electric switch-board—on the left beyond the dining-room door.

He stepped cautiously forward, put out his hand to grope for the lever; but, with a quick rush, some two or three assailants flung themselves upon him, and after a fierce, gasping struggle—for Brett was a strong man—he was borne to the ground face downwards, with one arm beneath him, and the other pinioned behind his back.

"Look sharp, Jim," shouted a breathless voice. "Turn on the light and close the door. We've got him safe enough."

They had. Two large hands closed round his neck, a knee was firmly embedded in the small of his back, another hand gripped his left wrist like a vice, whilst some one sat on his legs.

Brett could not have been collared more effectually by a Rugby International team.

The third man found the electric light and turned it on.

"Now, get up," said some one to Brett, "and don't give us any more trouble. It's no use."

The barrister, who had had his wind knocked out of him, rose to his knees. Then, as the light fell upon the horrified face of Mr. Winter, he vainly essayed to keep up the pretence of indignation. Once fairly on his feet again he, nearly collapsed with laughter. He leaned against the

wall and, as his breath came again, he laughed until his sides ached.

Meanwhile the detective was crimson with rage and annoyance. His two assistants did not know what to make of the affair.

"What's wrong, Jim?" said one at last. "Isn't this Pyne?"

"No; of course it's not," was his angry growl.

"Then who the — is it?"

"Oh, ask me another! How on earth could I guess, Mr. Brett, that you'd come letting yourself in here with a latchkey?"

Reggie was still holding his sore ribs and could not answer; but the policeman who had questioned Winter caught the name. He knew it, and grinned at his companion.

"What did you want here, anyhow?" snarled the infuriated Winter, as he realised that his great coup would be retailed with embellishments through every police station in the metropolis.

"I w-wanted you to ar-r-rest me, W-Winter," roared Reggie. "I s-said you would, and you have."

"Confound it, how could you know I was here?"

"You were sure to wait here for a man who probably will not return for months."

"Was I, indeed? Well, you have got yourself to blame if you have been hurt. I hope these gentlemen do not treat you too badly?"

"What?" cried one who had not yet spoken. "He gave me such a punch in the bread-basket that I've only just recovered my speech."

"I think we're about quits," said the other, surveying a torn waistcoat and broken watch-chain.

"I shall be black and blue all over to-morrow," said Brett; "but if you are satisfied I am. Come, Mr. Winter, bring your friends and we will open a bottle of wine. We all want it. Pyne won't be here to-night. Just now he is in Wyoming."

"How do you know?"

"By intuition. I am seldom mistaken."

"But why didn't you call out just now when you came in?"

"I hadn't a chance. You were on me like a thousand of bricks. I must confess that if Pyne had been in my shoes he would be a doomed man."

Winter did not know whether to believe Brett or not. He was genuinely angry at the incident, but the barrister did not want to convert him into an enemy, as he vaguely felt that a catastrophe was imminent, and a false move by the police might do irretrievable mischief.

"Well, Winter," he said, "I must confess that this time you have got the better of me. I did not know you were here. I looked in for the purpose of quietly studying the ground, as it were, and I was never more taken by surprise in my life. Moreover, your plan was a very clever one in view of the fact that Pyne might return at any moment."

The detective became a little more amiable at this praise from the famous amateur, for Brett's achievements were well known to his two colleagues.

"I suppose you wondered what had happened," he said with a smile.

"I thought my last hour had come. I am only sorry that Pyne himself did not have the experience."

"Do you really believe he is in the States, sir?"

"I am sure of it."

"Then he must have returned there since he wrote that letter."

"That is the only solution of the difficulty."

"Hum. It's a pity."

"Why?"

"I would sooner have arrested him on this side. To get him by extradition is a slow affair, and probably means a winter trip across the Atlantic for me."

"It means a Winter trip for you at any time of the year, Jim," laughed one of his companions.

Good humour being now restored, the party quitted the flat and adjourned to a neighbouring hotel, where the barrister started Winter on the full, true, and particular account of his pursuit and capture of the Winchmore Hill burglars.

At the end of a bottle of champagne and a cigar they all parted excellent friends, but Brett did not attempt to revisit No. 12, Raleigh Mansions, that night.

Instead, he partook of a quiet meal at a restaurant, and hurried to his chambers to await the advent of the ticket-collector.

Punctual to the hour named this new witness arrived, and was admitted by Smith in obedience with previous instructions. The man was somewhat awed by the palatial



"Come, sit near the fire. Do you drink whisky and soda?"

surroundings and the appearance of a servant in livery, but Brett quickly put him at his ease.

"Come, sit near the fire. Do you drink whisky and soda? That box contains your favourite cigars. Now, tell me all you know about this business."

"I can't s'y as I know anythink about it, sir, but by puttin' two and two together it makes four sometimes—not always."

"Quite right. You're a philosopher. Let me hear the two twos. We will see about the addition afterwards."

"Well, sir, this yer lydy was a-missin' early in November.

she tykes a ticket at Victoria Station on the District for Richmond; she gives it up to me at Sloane-square, asks a newsboy the w'y to Raleigh Mansion, for he tell'd me so after you'd bin to see me, an' from what you s'y, 'as bin swallered up ever since."

"The Lord Chief couldn't state the case more simply."

"That's the first two. Now, for the second two, an' you won't forgit as I knew nothink about the lydy bein' dead, or I should 'ave opened my mouth long afore this."

"Go on. No one can blame you."

"There's an old chap—Foxey they call 'im, but I don't know his right nyme—who drives a four-wheeler around Chelsea, an' 'e 'ad tyken a fare from the Square to the City. It might be four o'clock or it might be five, but he was on his w'y back from Cornhill when a gent, a tall, good-looking gent, a youngish, military chap, ails him and says: 'Cabby, drive me to Sloane-square. There's no hurry, but tyke care, 'cause it's foggy.' Old Foxey nearly jumped out of his skin at this bit of good luck. He was pretty full then, for 'e's a regular beer-barrel, 'e is, but 'e made up 'is mind to 'ave a fair old skinful that night. Well, Foxey drives him all right so the Square. The gent gives him five bob and says: 'Wite' here for me, cabby. You can drive me 'ome in about an hour's time.' This was at 5.30. Foxey drew up near the styttion, tells me all about it an' stands me two beers, he was that pleased with hisself. 'E goes to give his 'orse the nose-bag, in comes the Richmond train, and out pops the lydy with the Richmond ticket. D'y'e follow me?"

"Every word."

"An' you see now 'ow it is I can fix the d'y?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, I sees no more of Foxey. I missed him, about the Square, so one d'y I axes at the rank, 'Where's Foxey?' An' where d'y'e think 'e was?"

"I cannot tell."

"In quod!"



"Upon my word, things look very black against Mensmore. Yet I can't believe it."

"At the West London Police Court."

"You can get me his real name and post it to me?"

"Sure, sir. Any way, I'll try."

"I am greatly obliged to you."

"An' has my yarn bin of any use to you, sir?"

"The greatest. It has solved a puzzle. However, I will see you again. Good-bye. Don't forget to write."

"Cornhill is in the direct line from Leadenhall-street,"

mused Brett, when he was alone. "Anyone coming to Sloane Square from Dodge and Co's office would pass through it. Upon my word, things look very black against Mensmore. Yet I can't believe it."

(To be continued.)

"In jail. Why?"

"That's hit. That's number two of the two twos. Par-don me, but I am getting a bit mixed. Well, it seems that that very night, comin' back from Putney as drunk as a lord, old Foxey runs over a barrer. 'E an' the coster 'as a fight. The police come, an' Foxey dots one bobby in the blinker and another on the boko. You wouldn't think it was in 'im. 'E must 'ave bin paralytic."

"So he was locked up?"

"Locked up! He was dragged there by the eels. Next mornin' 'e comes before the beak. 'We was all drunk together, your wustup,' 'e says. 'I took a fare from the City to Sloane Square, an' 'e left me for more'n an hour. 'E comes back excited like—bin boozin' ard, I suppose—brings my keb up to a house, carries in a lydy who was that 'oxicated she couldn't stand, an' tells me to drive to Putney. We gits there, an' I says 'You've nearly killed my 'oss, guv'nor.' With that 'e tips me a fiver—a five-pun note, your wustup. 'What has that got to do with the charge?' says the beak. 'Wot?' says Foxey. 'If a chap gev you a fiver for drivin' 'im to Putney wouldn't you get drunk?' With that the magistrates gives 'im three months for assaultin' the police, an' fines 'im the balance of the fiver for bein' drunk in charge of a 'oss and keb."

"The ticket collector took a long drink after this recital."

"I hope you will not follow Foxey's example,"

said Brett, rising.

"How do you mean, sir?"

"Because I am going to keep my word. Here are the four sovereigns I owe you. In your case your two and two have made five."

"Thank you, sir. You're a brick. No fear of me meltin' this little lot. The missus will be on 'em like a bird when I tells her." And the man spat upon the coins with evident relish as he handled them.

"One word more," said Brett. "Where was this man tried?"

"At the West London Police Court."

"You can get me his real name and post it to me?"

"Sure, sir. Any way, I'll try."

"I am greatly obliged to you."

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(To be continued.)

SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 is. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "The Dregs of Wrath," by W. E. Grogan, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source must be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. H. Wigley, 5 Sutherland Street, Sheffield. Attempts this week may deal with Stories about ANY SUBJECT, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, February 4th. Post-cards only, please.

Smart.

In the High Street of a certain northern town there lived two drapers, who were determined rivals, and who were always trying to undersell or overreach each other in every possible way.

Both were shrewd, smart men, but one had slightly the advantage of the other in this respect.

The smarter of the two had his shop always open first in the morning, and his brother tradesman had to pass it on the way to his own.

Every morning he was in the habit of marking down most of the goods displayed in his windows, and after his rival had passed and noted the reductions, he withdrew the low-priced tickets and resumed his former prices.

He repeated this ruse morning after morning for several days, until the other, not to be out done in cheapness, was selling for elevenpence stockings which cost him fifteenpence wholesale.

This was the opportunity for which the smart man had been scheming all along.

He hired a lot of boys and girls to buy the stockings of his rival at the greatly-reduced rate, and, before his unsuspecting rival was aware of the fact, his entire stock of hosiery was transferred to the counter of his wide-awake opponent at elevenpence per pair, and were sold by him, as a "bankrupt lot, at a terrible sacrifice," at eightpence per pair.

H. W.

One Way of Getting Information.

A CANVASSER for one of the large railway companies running into Hull tells of the following incident:

One morning recently he received a communication from the head office informing him that a farmer in the district had applied for information regarding routes, rates, &c., and he had better wait upon him with a view of obtaining any traffic there might be.

On making inquiries, he found to his annoyance the address given was about six miles from the nearest station; but duty was duty, and one morning he trudged away to his destination. On arrival he found an old man pottering about a small farmstead, and made known his business. Picture his surprise when the old man said:

"Oh, yes, you're from the railway, Ah see. Well, mah dower is a teacher, and in her examination has to know a lot aboot railways, so Ah thowt Ah would rite to'd be. I quarters; that's mah way."

A. R. H.

From the Gallery.

SCENE: Monday night in a small East End theatre. The auditorium packed with a hot, uncomfortable crowd. Upon the stage, which is in darkness, a death-struggle between two shadowy figures is being enacted with much gasping and shuffling, accompanied by appropriately weird music from the band.

The struggle waxes fiercer, and at last reaches its culmination by one of the antagonists crashing heavily to the stage. The other starts back, gasps harder than ever, and in an agonised stage-whisper, says:

"Great Heaven! what have I done?"

But a voice from the gallery fairly knocked the bottom out of the effect by shouting:

"Strike a bloomin' match, and 'ave a look!"

A. A. W.

Shirking the Work.

ONE may have a very good ear for a tune without knowing much about harmony, or being in any sense an educated musician.

Several years ago, during a St. Patrick's Day procession, a certain official was observed listening intently to the playing of one of the bands, the cloud on his face increasing as he listened. Finally he went to the leader and broke out:

"Whin we pay good money to a band we want thim to all play. Now, here's wan or two of yez playing 'Sint Pathrick's Day,' and the rest of yez goin' 'toot, toot!' Why don't all of yez play the chune and airn your money?"

W. I.

Room For Expansion.

A LINE of ragged little boys were ranged down the centre of a Birmingham Board School the other day for exercise.

"Toe the line!" demanded the master.

A shuffling indicated obedience. The master inspected the line approvingly, until his eye rested on an urchin so far behind the others as to be almost out of sight.

"Smith," he cried, "why don't you toe the line?"

"Please, sir, I am toeing it," said the boy; "but I've got father's boots on."

The boots were toeing the line, but the wearer stood a good six inches back.

J. R. T.

His Word was Law.

THE majesty of the law has, no doubt, a certain fascination for the multitudes of raw young countrymen who seek to enter the constabulary service, and when they have passed muster and are dressed "in a little brief authority" and the regulation blue suit, "Robert" feels keenly that he must uphold the dignity of his new position.

It must surely have been one such who laid down the law in such unmistakable terms as the following:

Two acquaintances having met at the corner of a street, stood to have a chat. They had not been there long when a policeman coming up, addressed them with:

"Come, now, be movin' on and not be makin' a crowd there."

"Two don't make a crowd," replied one of them, and to his astonishment the policeman remarked:

"One's a crowd if I say it."

They were too much surprised to protest, and without a word they "moved on."

A. H.

A Willing Deputy.

A CAB stopped at the corner of a road where the well-to-do people lived.

A stylish young lady alighted, and looked puzzled over the numbers of the houses.

They seemed jumbled together anyhow. She wished to find 14, but they seemed all 40 and 50.

Seeing a smart looking policeman coming down the road, she said:

"Please can you tell me where 14 is?"

"He's off duty to-day, miss," replied the smart officer, "but if you don't mind waiting—I shall be off duty in twenty minutes—I can come instead!" J. J. McC.

Never Again.

"SERVES some women right," said Mrs. Gadabout, when the conversation began to lag.

"What does?" asked her neighbour, who stood with her apron over her head, waiting to hear the latest gossip.

"Trying to beat the rest of the world. You've heard about Mrs. Bargain and the auction, haven't you? No? Well, it's good.

"They were going to have an auction at Cheap and Co.'s, right across the street from where Sarah Bargain lives, and Sarah asked if she couldn't put in a sofa and a looking-glass and a lamp—things she had been trying to get rid of for a long time. Cost her ninepence to get the things taken over to Cheap's.

"When the auctioneer put up the mirror, somebody bought it for 2s. 3d. Then the lamp brought 5d., that's 2s. 8d.

"An old maid in the crowd bid half-a-crown for the sofa. Sarah thought she would raise the bid in the hopes that the old maid would go higher.

"Well, they see-sawed until the old maid bid 10s. Then Sarah bid 12s. 6d., and when no more bids were coming the auctioneer knocked it down to her.

"When she came to square up with the auctioneer—oh, well, pay his commission, if you want it that way—he charged her 2s. 1d.

"Wasn't she just mad! It cost her 6d. to get her old sofa back again home. There she was, without her mirror and lamp, and still had her sofa on her hands, and was out 8d. I tell you one thing—Mrs. Bargain will never try to sell anything at auction again."

F. W. F.

A Bet.

JACK was a jolly old bachelor. One afternoon one of his guests commented on the beauty of the new dining-table which Jack had recently purchased.

"There is only one fault with it—it's just a trifle too high. A table shouldn't exceed twenty-nine inches high, and this is an inch higher," said a guest.

"I'll bet you it is only twenty-nine inches high," returned Jack.

"Don't bet, Jack, I'm sure of it—for my eye is always correct."

"I'll bet you a fiver it's only twenty-nine inches high," said Jack.

"Well," answered the guest, "if you're willing I'll bet you: but I tell you beforehand I'll win."

"If you're right," said Jack, "I'll pay."

"Well, then, pay your debt. I measured it this morning, and it's just thirty inches high!" And Jack's guest burst into laughter.

"I know it," replied Jack, "for I saw you do it; and, knowing what a liking you have for joking I suspected your object. As soon as you went out for a stroll, I had an inch sawed off every leg; so you see the biter has been bitten. Hand over the cash!"

The guest paid amid the laughter of the company.

G. D.

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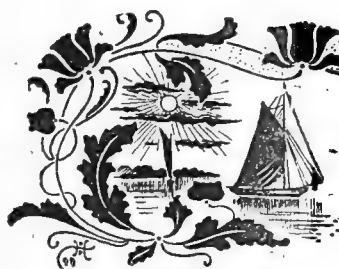
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An Odd Predicament.



"COME on, James, I'm sure we shall lose that train," cried Mrs. Tuttle impatiently.

"I can't help it if we do," snarled her husband. "Besides, we shan't do anything of the sort," he added. "You go on and get the train and leave me to look after myself. I'm more than six and quite able to I hope."

Tuttle was ruffled over a lost collar-stud, and when in that frame of mind a man is seldom courteous or even consistent. But Mrs. Tuttle had had twenty years' experience of James and she was hardened. She didn't even trouble to reply but gathered her skirts round her, raised her umbrella, for it was raining with a steady persistency, and set out.

About the time she reached the station, her husband came downstairs, putting on his hat and coat as he ran. He grabbed up his umbrella and stood on the step while he made a rapid calculation of his effects and duties to see if by any chance he had neglected anything.

"Raining again," he grumbled. "It's always raining in this infernal hole. Anyway, I don't think I have forgotten anything — yes, there's my latch-key — I shall want that. Cuss!"

Tuttle turned to close his umbrella preparatory to diving into the house again, and, as he turned for that purpose, a gust of wind, whistled down from a window on the upper landing and banged the door in his face. The wind put in a little overtime as it passed Tuttle in shifting his umbrella inside out, and occupied with that he failed to notice that his left leg was fastened up in a strange and unaccountable manner.

Finding his umbrella difficult to manage in the constricted space at his disposal, Tuttle took a step outwards and was fetched up with a sudden jerk that speedily broke

the tidings of great comfort and joy to him. He was hitched to the door unmistakably, and being already irritable this discovery tended towards a flow of eloquence not suitable for publication, however satisfactory it may have been to the orator.

Of course, Tuttle didn't recognise anything serious in the situation; it was just a trifling addition to the cussedness of inanimate things which that evening had been more than normally cussed. When, after a serious tug at his garment he found himself still tethered, Tuttle grew thoughtful, and about the time his wife had ensconced herself comfortably in a carriage and the train was on the move he was in a state of frantic anger and alarm.

The Tuttles, I should explain, had accepted an invitation to leave their little Essex retreat and try a day or two of giddy excitement in the whirl of the great metropolis under the auspices of an old friend of the family. Tuttle was quite willing, but as this story makes clear, his trousers were not sufficiently weak, and he simply didn't.

Tuttle heard the train go out—indeed, he could the lights of it streaming past the bottom of his own garden, and his feelings during the ordeal were not to be analysed.

Neither for that matter were his remarks. He let his umbrella go wheresoever it listed, and knelt down painfully to try and discover the exact nature of his anchorage.

It was simple—painfully simple, but effective! A fold of his trousers had been neatly gathered up and wedged in the closed door. Another fraction of an inch would have taken up a fold of his skin as well, but Tuttle didn't return any thanks for his escape from that, though he might have done had he given it reasonable thought.



Tuttle took a step outwards and fetched up with a sudden jerk.



Tuttle hopped about on the doorstep in fluttering shirt-tails.

Bad as his position undoubtedly was, it was devoid of physical pain—just then, but the nip he would have got had he been a trifle more unlucky, would have put him in a position to sympathise with the ancient Christians and others who have had practical experience of how painful pinching can be when done at all effectively.

Tuttle had tried tugging but he tugged a bit more at first with care and consideration lest he should tear his bags and render them unfitting for decent society, and then with more and more abandon and reckless disregard for "the blooming things"—I think he must have meant "bloomer" things—until he was leaning outwards and straining on them all he knew.

He needn't have been so careful. It was good sound cloth well wedged to a good sound bit of timber, and neither door nor trousers would budge the fraction of an inch. And there Tuttle stood, the picture of an ass, fastened up to his own doorway and unable to stir beyond it. He only wanted a nose-bag to render the illusion perfect.

Solitude is a perfect craze with Tuttle. That is why he inhabited a house just outside the suburban radius down a side street which led nowhere in par-

ticular and where nobody ever dreamt of walking if it could be avoided.

His own grounds ran a hundred yards up to his nearest neighbours, who were biggish people and had their house further separated from Tuttle's by a quarter of a mile or so of landed estate.

Tuttle had lots of time and plenty of opportunity for singing, "Wait till a man goes by, Jamy; wait till a man goes by." But he didn't sing it. He didn't sing anything. His brain was busy mapping out schemes of self-help which would have raised smiles from any thought-reader who chanced to be in the vicinity that night.

For instance, he had a pearl-handled pocket-knife and a box of matches, and he was exercised in his mind, whether to use the first in whittling away the front door just sufficiently to allow him to take the rest of his garment with him, or to rely on the second and sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar of liberty.

He was very much afraid that the garment would not be the only burnt offering made, supposing that the dampened cloth would have lit, or I really think he would have tried. The first idea was of course absurd. Even Tuttle saw that when he came to consider it seriously. Three-inch doors of solid oak won't yield like match sticks when attacked by toy outlery of that sort, and Tuttle knew it.

After an hour of deep mental stress, the sorrowful victim of dire mischance got another sort of stress to suffer under. This was a painful and deep-seated cramp, brought on by his constrained position, and developing speedily from a vague sense of discomfort to a clear and well-defined agony. The position too was irksome, wedged up in a corner and forced for hours to scrutinise a door-post which was just visible in the pitch blackness of the night.

The chilliness of the late autumn air induced a numbness that added to the awful cramp, produced a feeling of reckless despair in the hapless Tuttle.

He heard nine, ten, half past and eleven chime in successive stages from the village church-tower, and by that time he was ripe for any desperate deed that suggested itself as being likely to effect his liberation. He had dwelt rather hopefully at first on the chance of his wife returning when she found that he was not in the train, but the passage of time speedily dispersed this casual bit of optimism and set him longing for a pickaxe or something solid wherewith to batter down the door. He would have paid for the damage cheerfully just to get possession of an inch or two of cloth, which shows how easily extravagance may be born in a man.

He could have longed just as easily for his latch-key; but I suppose he didn't think of that. Desperate situations require desperate remedies, and a mere latch-key would have been too prosaic and small altogether.

All idea of going up to London had of course been abandoned by this time. Tuttle had heard the last train go through an hour before, but he wasn't interested. What he wanted to do was to get free, after that he might trouble to break into the house and get to bed; but it was the getting free that really appealed to him. He had an inspiration shortly before twelve o'clock struck, and as he proceeded to put his idea into operation, he kicked himself mentally for not having thought of it before.

It was so very simple and obvious that it really was a marvel that he had overlooked it. Since he could not get his garments out of the door why not get out of his

garments? It would be chilly and undignified; but it was retired and quiet and there was no earthly reason why he couldn't run round to the back of the house in his shirt-tails, force an entrance and obtain as many pairs of trousers as he required—and that particular pair into the bargain.

With numbed and shaky fingers Tuttle fumbled at his braces, and two minutes afterwards he discovered one little obstacle that stood in the way of a speedy realisation of his purpose. He couldn't get his foot through the aperture, so closely was the garment drawn round his leg, and in a state of hysterical grief and anger Tuttle hopped about on the doorstep in fluttering shirt-tails and said all the wicked things he could think of.

It wasn't very satisfactory, and it was decidedly parky, and with greater difficulty than he had experienced in getting out of them, Tuttle once more donned his trousers, and wished vaguely that he was dead or drunk or something. Then he said he didn't care a simple solitary hang about anything or anybody, and he found his pipe and lit it and smoked in sullen sorrow for nearly two hours.

In giving an account of his experiences later at the police-station Tuttle said he supposed he must have fallen asleep, cold and cramp notwithstanding. He didn't remember doing so; but all of a sudden he came to a recollection of where he was, and at the same moment he heard a whispered consultation and then a stealthy creeping in the bushes below the drawing-room window.

"Hi! is anyone there?" he yelled excitedly.

No answer came, and he paused and listened again. The whispering had ceased; but he was certain of a stealthy footfall somewhere in his own front-garden, and he made another despairing appeal for assistance.

"Come and give me a hand. I'm fixed up in the door and can't get out," he called desperately.

This time there was a very decided and pronounced footfall in response, and a slim respectable-looking figure in a cricket-cap and other things came round the corner within range of Tuttle's vision.

"What's up, guv'nor," said a voice belonging to it.

Tuttle plunged into the history of his misery and woe and implored assistance at any price the man might like to name. He mentioned beer and food and gold in one breath, and undying gratitude in the next.

The man didn't hurry but seemed interested.

"Can't get out, that's a rum go?" said he as one who ponders on an elusive but absorbing problem. "Why don't you undo the door, then?"

Tuttle thought the man was a fool, but he didn't say so. Instead, he meekly went into the subtle difficulties of his position and managed to make it clear and beyond any dispute that he didn't undo the door, or release himself by any other means, because it was utterly impossible and not to be done.

He, the man, could do it if he would, and Tuttle dwelt in detail on a certain unfastened window round at the back which was easy of

access and offered no difficulties whatever to an active man bent on being of service to a fellow creature in distress.

"I'll see what I can do, mister," said the noble-hearted fellow after further consideration which brought on a fresh attack of cramp and impatience in Tuttle. "But what about the dawg?"

"There isn't any dog," snapped Tuttle, impatiently. "There isn't any living creature about the place but myself."

"All right, cocky, don't get shirty," said the man with a sudden access of gross familiarity, "I'll go and have a look."

He went. To Tuttle's over-strained nerves it seemed that a double footfall went round to the side of the house, and he could almost have sworn he heard a whispered consultation.

"Must have been the wind in the trees," he mused. "I hope he'll hurry up. Wonder how much he'll expect for this? Should think half-a-crown and a glass of whisky ought to satisfy him. He seemed rather rough, and I was a fool to mention that sovereign. I had better tell him to call in the morning when it is day, light and there will be someone about if he should cut up rough. You have to treat these fellows with a firm hand or they'll rob you right and left."

They will! Tuttle waited and waited, but not a sign or a suggestion of the rescue party was forthcoming.



"Ta, ta, cocky, sweet dreams," said one, with a derisive chuckle.



"The latch was within two inches of your nose, and you hadn't the sense to knock a hole in the glass."

He strained his eyes trying to see into the dark hall, and then he became aware of a fitful will-of-the-wisp sort of light flickering about at the head of the stairs.

"Why, confound his impudence! He's actually prying," gasped Tuttle in petrified astonishment at the sheer impudence of the thing.

"Hi! You fellow. Come down at once and undo this door. How dare you go up to my room."

A window opened above him and a surly voice growled.

"Shut up, you old fool, or I'll drop something on your nut. What sort of a bally ass do you take me for?"

Tuttle stood in petrified astonishment for half a second, and then the awful truth dawned upon him. The man was a burglar, and he had simplified his work for him and given him a means of excess, and saved him no end of laborious efforts with jimmy and other nefarious tools.

He started to yell: "Police, police! Help! Burglars!" at the top of his voice.

There was a hoarse chuckle from the room above and a pail of water, pail and all, fell at his feet and deluged him.

Then another voice spoke up. It said:

"Let the old fool yell, Bill. It'll amuse him and

won't hurt us. You bet he wouldn't have been there all night if yelling would have set him loose. Lor! this is a swap."

This reasoning, sound and convincing as it was, struck a chill into the heart of the unfortunate man below who was constrained to stand and wait while his portable and valuable belongings were rifled without being able to lift a hand in defence of them.

Footsteps came and went inside the house, dim lights shone mysteriously from windows and passages, and now and again he caught the sound of hoarse vulgar glee, or surprised comment indicative of joy at some unexpected piece of luck, or annoyance at coverts from which much was expected, drawing blank.

It lasted an hour—the worst hour Tuttle had ever spent in his life—and at the end of it the lights died away, the noise ceased, and shortly afterwards Tuttle became aware of two forms outlined against the fence in the dull grey of early dawn.

They came nearer, and with an indignation too deep for words Tuttle saw that one had donned his light dust-coat, with umbrella and hat to match, and the other was wearing his brand new trousers and tall hat. They were both smoking cigars which Tuttle felt sick to think ought to be between his own lips, and they had his big Gladstone bag between them with pounds' worth of portable property in it, and a small bag apiece to balance.

"Ta ta, cocky, sweet dreams," said one with a derisive chuckle.

Tuttle called them "rude fellows," and "body snatchers," and lots of other things which hardly seemed applicable but were no doubt prompted by the callous impudence of the proceedings; but he was merely wasting the sweetness on the desert air. They didn't even trouble to stop and hit him but passed out of the gate together down the road and were swallowed up in the immensity of space.

Two hours later a policeman making an early round discovered a conspicuous character drenched and bedraggled asleep up against a door-post of "The Lindens." He shook it and obtained only sundry irrelevant observations in which the words "burglars," "door," "trousers," "all night," continually recurred.

"This looks fishy," observed the policeman *sotto voce*. "The chap's drunk or lunny. He looks a conspicuous lot. Come out of it my man."

He gave the paralysed Tuttle a drag, but Tuttle didn't come. He moved out a bit—as far as the policeman could drag him, that is—and on being released, sprang back as though fastened there by india-rubber springs, and bumped against the door post. This puzzled the policeman and made Tuttle more idiotic than ever. He started to cry, and asked the man as an immense favour to lead him off somewhere quiet and retired, and poleaxe him.

The officer couldn't oblige, but his suspicions were doubled now. He knew that class of shifty tramping individual, who dabbled in burglary in an amateurish way, and then got too drunk to get away with the spoil. He flashed his bull's-eye round and made a closer investigation.

"Oh, oh! that's it, is it?" said he with a whistle of

mingled amusement and satisfaction. "Cracked the crib, got fuddled, and pinched himself by the togs coming away. Rummiest capture I have ever made."

"All right my man, you'll be safe there for ten minutes I'll just go and have a look round and then we'll walk along together and find a nice warm dry comfy cell for one of us."

Tuttle babbled—just babbled. He was dead beat, half asleep and half fainting, and past taking an interest even in "nice dry cells."

He would have liked a nice "long narrow one for ever laid," had the officer had such a thing handy; but even the liking for that wasn't very pronounced.

The policeman went the rounds, and of course it wasn't long before he spotted the little window so invitingly left open.

"Ha!" said he, "the old dodge! in here and out at the front. This ought to mean something serviceable to me."

He went in and in two minutes had evidence enough to commit any number of Tuttle's had they only been genuine *bona fide* burglars.

The place was literally ransacked from top to bottom. "But where's he stowed it!" he reflected, "he couldn't have got away with it, that's certain. That'll do later, anyway, when I've lodged the beauty at the station: May as well go out of the front door and see to that first."

He chuckled as he paused and reflected on a neat little fold of his prisoner's breeches safely pinched in the door. Then he released the catch and the next minute was tearing down the path and along the road in chase of a bare-headed lunatic who was splashing through mud and puddles, waving his arms and frantically yelling "burglars."

Up by the station the officer overtook his quarry, and with the assistance of a brother constable led him off to another sort of station.

"House broken into and ransacked, sir," he explained to the sergeant in charge. "Found the prisoner caught in the door-way by his trousers, sir. He said he was a burglar and had been there all night."

"Right," said the sergeant tersely. "Anything on him?"

They searched the hapless Tuttle, and then put him

to soak in a cell while an inspector and the constable who had made the capture went back to investigate.

That burglary had been committed there, was ample evidence; but the officials couldn't get much further than that for all their trouble.

"There's been two in this, Wilcox," observed the inspector.

"Shouldn't be surprised, sir," replied the man. "It struck me that was how it was, and I expect his pal took advantage to clear off with the swag."

Along towards midday when Tuttle was being tidied up and made to look pretty for a preliminary visit to the presiding magistrate, Mrs. Tuttle came back in haste and irritation mingled with a vague anxiety as to what had become of her husband and found her house in possession of the police.

She knew her husband better than they could have been expected to do, and she had her suspicions long before she got to the station. When she did there was a scene.

Tuttle was furious and under the stimulating influence of hot cocoa and bread and butter sane enough now to give his remarks point and pith. The police were apologetic but maintained the reasonableness of their action.

Mrs. Tuttle also had her views of her husband, and expressed them briefly in the feminine equivalent for a painful irresponsible ass.

She didn't so much object to Tuttle spending a night on the door-step if that was his idea of rational healthy amusement, but to stand there like a ninny while her valuables were coolly appropriated and marched off with under his very nose was quite another matter altogether.

"Caught by your clothes," she snorted in fine disdain. "The latch was within two inches of your nose and you hadn't the sense to knock a hole in the glass."

That was the crowning blow!

Tuttle broke down under it and went home and to bed, and stayed there for the rest of the day.

They managed to catch the burglars down the line, and they, Tuttle's, got back nearly all their property intact, or I don't believe he would ever have smiled again.

As it is he has long and painful hours of meditation, and he is particularly careful on going out to stand well away from the door before closing it.

FRANK SEARS.

IN FAR CATHAY.

In the darkest, dingiest street in all Whampoa, the "street of many joys," lived the widow, Sing-Shu, and her daughter, the pretty little Li-Li.

They were very poor, so poor indeed that Li-Li, fond to a degree of personal finery, and fonder still of displaying it, had often the greatest difficulty in procuring the means of gratifying her vanity.

The widow, with her daughter's assistance, contrived to eke out a scanty living by the manufacture of the various sweet dainties dear to the heart of the average Chinese child. These she would take out into the streets and sell, sometimes successfully, at others bringing home a nearly full tray, and a heavy heart.

It was at such times as these that Li-Li and her mother suffered most, and that the poor room, which served them for a dwelling, appeared to reflect only too plainly the ill-fortune of its inmates.

The widow bore the shocks of poverty with anything but a patient spirit. Perhaps she was weary of life, and its ceaseless, monotonous struggles to maintain a bare existence. Perhaps her thoughts went back now and again to the days when, but just wedded, Hung-So, her husband, a distinguished member of the "literary" class, could and did surround her with many of life's luxuries, in the Chinese sense of the word.

When Li-Li was a tiny tot, lying cowering on the floor, and playing mischievously with the temptingly dangling end of her student-father's pigtail, the prospects of the little "Celestial" seemed bright and rosy indeed.

But there came a day when Hung-So was accented to the Viceroy of the Province by the Chief Mandarin in Whampoa of a—in Chinese eyes—terrible crime; nothing less in fact than the holding of advanced socialistic

opinions. It was suggested that he had imbibed these from a certain young Englishman, the interpreter to a large business house in Whampoa, and a warm, personal friend of Hung-So's.

The possession of Western ideas and inclinations was then, as now, looked upon by "the powers that be" as dangerous in the extreme, and, although Hung-So was amiable and honest-hearted, seeking no personal aggrandisement nor the injury of any man, his enemies determined upon his ruin.

That the private fortune of the unhappy scholar had excited official cupidity is not only probable but certain, for after his condemnation and sentence to an indefinite period of imprisonment, and the savage punishment of the "canque," the "vultures" descended upon his property, which they devoured to the last shred, leaving his wife and child to the mercy of a cold, cruel world.

The highly-strung, sensitive nature of Hung-So could not long endure the mental and physical torture of his iniquitous chastisement. Two months after the pronouncement of the unjust judgment the wretched man succumbed to the severity of his sufferings, but it was at least two years later when Sing-Shu learnt that she was husbandless.

Li-Li, now a girl of seventeen, with the smallest feet, the glossiest black hair, and the most impertinent little nose ever seen, had a vivid recollection of her father. Like him, she was quick-brained, clever, but unlike him, she was vivacious and merry-hearted to an extent that sometimes sorely irritated her surviving parent.

Li-Li had lovers in plenty, that went without saying, but she was a born coquette, and so played with and teased her admirers that, though they still kept round the honey-pot, their adoration was in no small measure tempered with discretion.

It so happened that in the same street, "the street of many joys," there dwelt two brothers, by name respectively Quang-Ho and Ah-Sheng.

No man knew the nature of their occupation, although many suspected its true character. Periodically they would quit Whampoa in their own river boat, to be absent a month, or two months, according to the time of year.

It was noticeable that both brothers, on returning from each of these journeys, invariably paid a visit to the house of the widow, Sing-Shu. They never came together, but always at intervals of a day. Each, too, was the bearer of some trinket or other article as a present for the fair Li-Li.

Quang-Ho, the elder of the twain, generally contrived to get to windward, so to speak, of his brother, and make the first call. But Ah-Sheng was a cunning man; a man who could patiently bide the time in any and every event of this life.

He was aware of Quang-Ho's inordinate addiction to the use of the fatal drug in both its insidious forms. True, he was himself an opium-smoker in a small, moderate way, but was too clever to allow the habit to have such complete mastery over him as to interfere with his deliberately laid plans and schemes. He therefore trusted to his own self-repressive power and to his brother's intemperate indulgence to bring about that which he devoutly desired.

Both men loved Li-Li in a way, but of the two Quang-Ho's affection had about it the most reality. He was more single-hearted than his fraternal relative, who, believing in nothing in heaven, or in earth, or in the waters under the earth, had a supreme contempt for sentiment of any kind whatsoever.

It may be said at once that Quang-Ho was in Li-Li's eyes the most desirable suitor. Her mother also favoured his attentions. Ah-Sheng's presents might have been intrinsically of more value, but the donor ever spoilt the effect of his gift by his manner of giving. Try as he would to play even passably the part of wooer, he dismally failed, besides letting it be plainly seen that he would assuredly stick at nothing to obtain his end.

In the neighbourhood of the gate of "The Precious Girdle," the east gate of the city, were a few houses, of unenviable reputation for gambling. John Chinaman is an inveterate gambler. He brings the desire for it into the world with him; it is in his blood. The passion for "staking upon the cast" is so strong within him that he will starve himself, strip himself, and bring himself to the verge of death almost in order to gratify his mad craving for the "fan-tan" frenzy.

Unfortunately for his own welfare, Quang-Ho was in this respect no better than the rest of his fellows.

One of the houses above all the rest had among the select initiated a name for high play and free opium. With the worshippers of the drug the latter fact operated, of course, as a powerful attraction and inducement.

It was on an evening when Quang-Ho was at the widow's house that Ah-Sheng took his way in the direction of the gate of "The Precious Girdle." A brief parley at the door of the tenement he sought, and he was admitted.

The proprietor, an evil-looking Chinaman, with eyes whose unpleasant propinquity gave him an expression of limitless villainy, seemed to have expected Ah-Sheng, for, without any salutation, he led him into a close, dark den at the extreme rear of the building, carefully closing the door after them.

"Is it to be to-night?" said the rascally dealer in men's souls and bodies.

"Yes," replied Ah-Sheng in a low, cautious tone, "to-night. I will give you notice of his coming a few minutes before."

"Good," said the other. "But the price, my friend, the price. Have you brought it with you? You promised it to-night."

"It is here," impatiently returned Ah-Sheng, producing from the bosom of his jacket a small bag, the contents of which chinked pleasantly in the ears of his companion.

This important matter settled, Ah-Sheng remarked with imperious emphasis:

"Remember, if you play me false I will do that which shall cause this house to be razed to the ground before morning. Carry out my instructions to the letter, and a similar sum to that I have now given you shall be yours. Savee?"

The wicked little eyes of the other blinked and half-closed in sweet anticipation, while he purred like some disreputable tom-cat contemplating mischief.

"I savee," he said with a cold smile and a hard compressing of the lips that augured badly for the unfortunate victim.

"The boat is ready in the little creek," continued Ah-Sheng, "on the north side, and the captain of the junk has agreed to weigh anchor directly his freight is on board. It only remains for you to do your part and earn the 'syce silver' awaiting you."

Ah-Sheng rose and left the room, passing behind the other, through a long, gaudily-decorated apartment filled with three tiers of bunks on either hand, and containing close to a large charcoal brazier, glowing red, a

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table, at which sat and stood, leaning over it with bleared, staring eyes, a dozen Chinamen absorbed in their wrestle with chance. A quick glance at the miserable infatuates, and Ah-Sheng went out, rapidly walking towards "the street of many joys."

In the little hut, for it was nothing better, Quang-Ho and pretty Li-Li sat talking, the old mother dozing in a corner, quite oblivious to all that was being said.

"Li-Li," Quang-Ho was saying, "the money is enough now. My last trip has made me rich. We will leave Whampoa and Ah-Sheng, who loves me not, and go to Canton. There will we set up a little eating-house, where the delicate roast dog and the white rat's leg shall persuade in the hungry passer-by. Shall it be, my golden lily?"

"Quang-Ho is good, and we will go; but I fear the brother. Ah-Sheng is a bad man. He makes love to me, though he knows that I am yours. Can we go soon?"

"Yes, Li-Li, in three days time we will go. But," and Quang-Ho rose up and made to depart, "I have business to do to-night by the gate of 'The Precious Girdle,' and the moon is high. I must leave my little wife."

Even as he spoke a face appeared at the window, a cruel, hard face, with an expression upon it of devilish triumph.

Li-Li saw it, and caught instinctively at the loose sleeve of Quang-Ho's jacket, but she managed to repress an inclination to call out. As her eyes met those of the spy the face disappeared.

"Do not go yet," she pleaded, "I am lonely till my mother wakes."

"Little one, I must go; but I will come again to-morrow."

"Ah," she sobbed out, "to-morrow may never come—to-morrow may never come!"

Gently disengaging his sleeve from her grasp, Quang-Ho whispered a few endearing and reassuring words and went his way.

Li-Li sat on with her face in her hands for a minute or two, then she got up quickly, and enveloping herself almost from head to foot in a long, dark blue robe of Sing-Shu's, she opened the door timidly, looked this way and that, and sped in the direction of the gate of "The Precious Girdle."

When Quang-Ho reached the door of the gambling-house he found it on the jar. Pushing it open, he went through to the room Ah-Sheng had traversed but a short while ago. The proprietor, who was busy superintending the "fan-tan" table, left his occupation and smilingly addressed the new-comer.

"Better have a pipe before play," he said, furtively glancing from under his half-closed lids at Quang-Ho.

This was a temptation not to be resisted, and the old man, himself preparing the dainty morsel in the lamp which always stood burning, handed the reed to the other. At the same time he pressed upon him a cup of "samshu," to warm his heart, as he said.

Quang-Ho took the reed and the cup, and retired to one of the unoccupied bunks. The old man watched him with cunning eyes until the drug inhaled and the cup emptied, Quang-Ho sank back torpid and breathing heavily.

Soon the stertorous respiration apparently ceased, and the other, hurrying the players at the table to their bunks, hastily went out to the door, where, in the shadow of the neighbouring shop entrance, stood Ah-Sheng.

"Well," said the latter eagerly, "is all ready?"

"Yes," answered the old man, "nothing short of the 'claw of the dragon' will have power to wake him until the sun sinks in the west to-morrow."

Ah-Sheng made no reply, but beckoning to two coolies who bore between them a black, coffin-shaped box, he bid them deposit it within the entry of the house and follow the proprietor.

In less than five minutes they reappeared bearing the inert, corpse-like form of Quang-Ho. Laying it in the box, which they then raised shoulder high, they trotted off through the gate and along the road which girdles the island and leads to the north side.

First passing something to the old man, Ah-Sheng turned and rapidly pursued the course which led to his own dwelling.

Now the two men who bore the burden were lazy rascals, and once out of sight of their employer they slackened their pace, and, by-and-by, halted for a rest. They had not observed a long-robed little figure following them. The moon was now hidden, and they were too intent upon their chatter with which they sought to beguile the weariness of the way.

At the spot they selected, by the side of the road, and on the top of a steep, green slope which trended down to a deep, stagnant pool, they laid down the box, and throwing themselves on the ground, were soon fast asleep.

There is no knowing of what a woman's arm is capable in moments of intense excitement. Li-Li felt assured, for her woman's wit had told her that in that box lay the reason for all this mystery, and she leaned over the sleeping coolies, her brain busy with thoughts of what she should do.

The sight of blood was abhorrent to her. She would not knowingly hurt the least of living things, but here was a crisis when she must, as it were, play the part of a "Celestial" Judith. The opportunity was under her hand. How it was done she never really realised. The men lay broadside on to the slope and side by side.

With a fervent prayer to her departed ancestors for strength, the girl suddenly pushed the nearest coolie so effectively that in collision with his fellow they both rolled at lightning speed down the slope.

Two startled cries, and simultaneously almost two heavy splashes in the dark, turbid water, and Li-Li was lying in a dead swoon across the coffin-shaped, black box.

Quang-Ho now runs the best restaurant in Canton. His wife, Li-Li—the old mother has long been dead—is a true helpmeet for him, while, always in the way, chirping merrily in the wake of his father and mother, is a veritable little replica of Quang-Ho himself.

Ah-Sheng disappeared from Whampoa altogether upon the failure of the plot, and the gambling den by the gate of "The Precious Girdle" has been shut up and deserted this many a day. RALPH ENDERBY.

"A MOUNTAIN THAT DISAPPEARED"

is the subject of an extraordinary article in the

FEBRUARY "PEARSON'S"

describing the strange history of Mount Mazama, a mountain which committed suicide.

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE for February may be described in one word—**SUPERB**. Some good advice on the subject may be given in two words—**BUY IT**.

A STRAWBERRY PICNIC.

The *Morning Leader*, July 13th, 1898, says: "Messrs. S. Chivers and Sons, the well-known jam and jolly manufacturers, understand the art of entertainment no less than the art of jam making. On Tuesday they invited a number of Pressmen to a strawberry picnic at their farm at Histon, Cambridge. The wondering pickers were delighted with the sight of two score top-hatted visitors bending their backs to the willing task of finding large strawberries. It is just twenty-five years since Messrs. Chivers started jam-making. They now have a thousand acres of land under cultivation, and employ, when busy, eight hundred hands. The jam factory is within the circle of the fruit-fields, and the fruit can therefore be handled without delay." In addition to the crops grown by the firm itself, a very large quantity of fruit is obtained from various growers in the neighbourhood of the factory. Plucked early on a summer's morn, the fruit is made into jam, or the juice extracted to flavour Chivers' Gold Medal Jellies. A lady writes from Ashton-under-Lyne: "I have tried several preparations of Table Jellies, and have not been satisfied with them, but yours have given me complete satisfaction. I shall continue to use and recommend them to my friends." Nurse A. writes: "I consider your uted Jellies peculiarly adapted for use in the sick-room, and for those who suffer from dyspepsia." The Official Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, 1895, says: "Messrs. Chivers' factory at Histon is now well-known throughout the country for the excellence of its manufactures."



Chivers' Gold Medal Jams and Table Jellies are sold by Grocers and Stores throughout the United Kingdom. *Insist on being supplied with Chivers'.* A free sample packet of Jelly will be sent on receipt of post-card. S. Chivers and Sons, Histon, Cambridge.

FREE SAMPLE of most useful Pocket Rubber Stamp with particulars of splendid paying agency for whole or spare time.—Apply Dept. Y, 89 Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.

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Send me an envelope (stamped and addressed) and I will tell you how to remove all superfluous hair free of charge. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Miss E. V. (Room 8), 185 Oxford Street, London, W.

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With a guarantee to keep correct time for three years, will be sent to any address on receipt of P.O. or stamps value 2/9 and three stamps extra for postage. To every purchaser during this month we give with it ABSOLUTELY FREE a strong Mexican SILVER CHAIN. All we ask of you is to show them to your friends, as by doing so you advertise our business. GENEVA WATCH IMPORTERS, 148 Old Street, London, E.C.

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SEND NO MONEY WE TRUST YOU.

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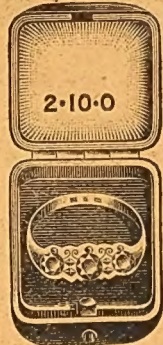
saying that you will either sell the Jewellery or return it to us if you fail to sell it with your name and address clearly written. On receiving your post card we will at once post you the Jewellery.

When sold, send us the 13s. 6d. you have received for same, and we will at once send you (no waiting), **Absolutely Free**, our £2 10s. Real Silver Watch with Chain, or the Gold Ring, whichever you desire.

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**WHAT THE PUBLIC SAYS:—
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100 High Street,
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Dear Sir,—Just a line to acknowledge having received the beautiful present; it was beyond expectation. There are a lot of goods from a Glasgow firm but nothing compared with the British Goldsmiths Company's goods. We are knocking them in the shade altogether. Everyone who has bought our goods speak very well of them. I will do my best for your Company in little Wales.—Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM WILLIAMS.

WHAT THE PRESS SAYS:—

"We have received some samples of the jewellery now being sold by the British Goldsmiths Co., the value of which is really wonderful considering the low prices asked for the goods. The British Goldsmiths Co. send out their goods to be sold by those who wish to put their spare time to good advantage. We should think there would be little difficulty about selling the goods we have before us. They are substantial, well finished, and cheap. The company offers a handsome present free to all persons selling a certain number of these articles."—**HOMER SWEET HOME, Jan. 5th, 1901.**

BRITISH GOLDSMITHS CO. (DEPT. 29), 48 GRAY'S INN RD., LONDON.

Mr. Geo. R. Sims' "TATCHO." Discovery

20,000 LARGE (4/6 SIZE) BOTTLES TO BE DISTRIBUTED.

"TATCHO" is a brilliant spirituous tonic, the colour of whisky, free from all grease. A sprinkle of a few drops on the scalp five minutes with the brush daily works marvels with every head of hair.

"TATCHO" acts as an invigorating tonic. It stops the hair falling, creates a luxuriant growth, and imparts to it a bright and youthful lustre.

"When I discovered the preparation, I found that I had hit upon a remedy capable of working wonders," said Mr. George R. Sims to the representative of the *Daily Mail*. "Look at my hair now. Look at the colour. In time people got to know. Then the trouble began.

"Letters in thousands poured in to me from men and women in every quarter of the world, from all parts of the Kingdom, from America, India, Africa, China, and Australia. The work of answering the letters was enormous, and as far as possible the desired information was supplied; but it became quite evident that at the rate at which the demand was increasing I should very soon need a large staff of clerks to attend solely to the Hair renewer department of correspondence.

"In consequence, I said to myself, Why should this thing go on? If the public wants my hair renewer, the public shall have it; but the demand must be met in the ordinary business-like way. So I resolved to place the genuine article within reach of all, and with the assistance of a number of gentlemen, possessing the necessary commercial facilities, that has been accomplished."

THE GEO. R. SIMS' COMPANY HAVE DECIDED TO DISTRIBUTE 20,000 LARGE TRIAL BOTTLES OF TATCHO to enable those who have not yet profited by Mr. G. R. Sims' discovery, to have the opportunity of doing so. The Company does this in the belief that such distribution will enable the preparation to become more widely known, and will introduce it to every home in a far more satisfactory manner than through unlimited puffing by advertisement.

COUPON.

S.S.

Feb. 2, 1901.

If you are desirous of participating in this distribution cut out this Coupon and send it to the Geo. R. Sims' Co., 81c Great Queen Street, London, W.C., accompanied by a postal order for 1/10. You will receive by return of post a plain package containing

A FULL SIZE 4s. 6d. TRIAL BOTTLE OF "TATCHO" POST PAID,

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Dr. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., &c., lecturing on Foods, says:—"The chief text in the Gospel of Nutrition is that Tea and Coffee are not Foods at all, while Cocoa is an admirable and sustaining diet. Than **FRY'S PURE CONCENTRATED COCOA**, no better food product of this nature can be obtained or used."

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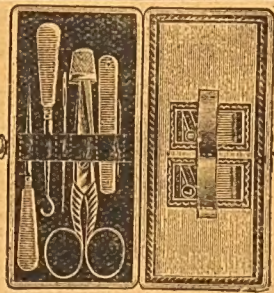
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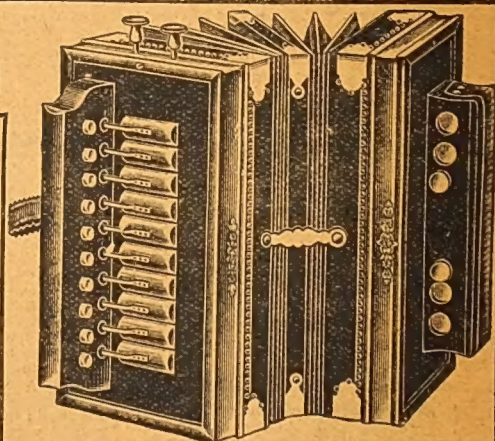
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